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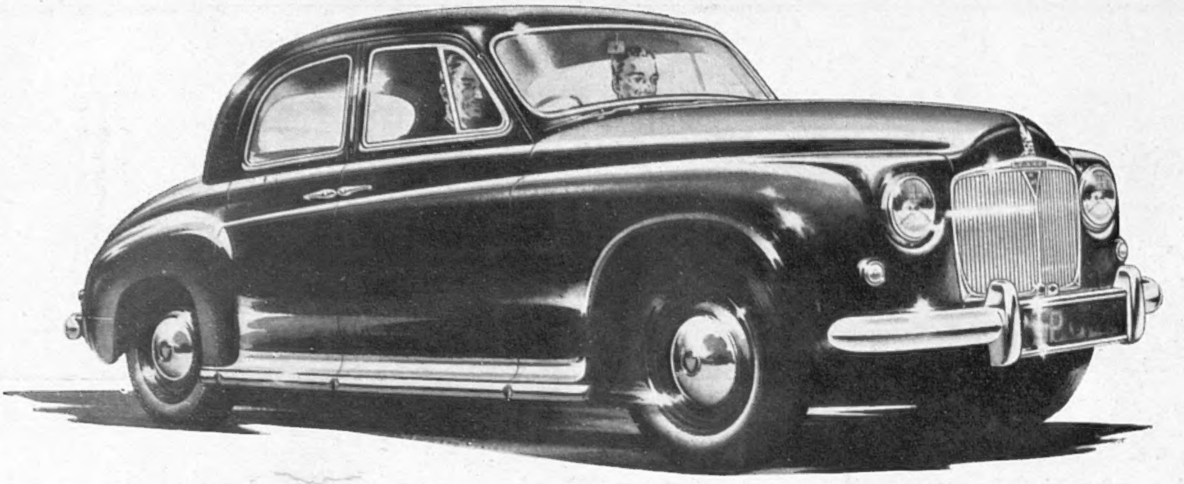

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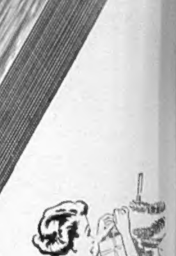

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YARDLEY
for Christmas

The Sketch

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1952

A WHITE SWAN

This Thursday (December 18), Miss Beryl Grey is due to face one of the great moments of a ballerina's career. At a gala performance of *Swan Lake* at Covent Garden, in the presence of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret, she undertakes one of the most important symbolic roles in ballet—the dual Odette/Odile. It will be the first time Miss Grey has danced a full-length ballet before Royalty, and something of the unflurried temperament which she will bring to the task has been captured in our portrait, which is the work of Margaret Boden. Thursday's gala performance is in aid of the Sadler's Wells Benevolent Fund and the Sadler's Wells School.

"BUSHY" Cashes in on Chlorophyll—By Hargrave

Our Motley Notes

By Toby O'Brien

THIS issue of *The Sketch* will appear a few days before Christmas, and I would like therefore to wish a very happy Christmas to all readers, including all those who have written in, happily or angrily, during the past year. I think it would not be inappropriate, too, to wish a happy, peaceful and good-tempered Christmas to our legislators, who will have separated for their Christmas hols. just in time to avoid any more major explosions. The unfortunate House of Commons, with late nights and frayed tempers, was described to me by one old Member recently as having " something of the atmosphere of a Borstal just before somebody burns down the library."

I could not help being a little amused, however, by the recent breeze when Mr. Churchill was called a " goose "—a term which was found to be perfectly Parliamentary. Indeed, it is one of which the Prime Minister is himself fond, and I recall one occasion when he used it to excellent effect. There had been a Parliamentary storm when he was in opposition, and his followers felt that he had made an error of judgment and mishandled the situation. Feeling among them was running very high. Mr. Churchill, who is as quick to repent as he is swift to wrath, was informed of this. That evening he arrived at a dinner-party given by a prominent supporter. When they questioned him about this major political storm, Mr. Churchill shook his head from side to side, and then, with that utterly disarming puckish look, exclaimed: " I fear I appear to have made a silly goose of myself "—from which moment, of course, nobody could continue to be cross with him.

SEASON of school trains, returning trunks, pantomimes, and happily anticipatory young faces is also upon us—bringing with them, to the puzzlement of their parents, whole new lines in schoolboy jargon. " Smashing," I was scornfully informed by two young ladies recently, is as much out-moded as " soppy date," with which I had just conscientiously made myself familiar. In its place are such phrases as " tip-type " (which being interpreted means apparently " typical type," which in its turn means—what ?). And " hid-ob." an inelegant portmanteau word for " hideous object." The wartime R.A.F. use of " wizard " is, the eleven-year-old authorities tell me, still permitted, but only in conjunction with " supersonic "—*i.e.*, " wizard supersonic." The " rippings " of my youth, and the " bally " of half a generation earlier, are, of course, regarded as antediluvian—the latter having fallen into disuse now that the young are perfectly capable of coming out with the sanguinary adjective for which it was such a convenient euphemism. I was, therefore, a little heartened to find that a word I had completely forgotten, having not heard it for close on thirty years, " batey "—*i.e.*, the state of being " in a bate," of

"getting into a bate," or getting "waxy" or "in a wax"—was still apparently in full use in some of the major educational establishments of the south coast.

Things move so much faster these days. Prep. school and public school slang in the past would often last a whole generation. Now I do not envy the successors of Seton Merriman and Angela Brazil in trying to keep their dialogue fresh and up to date for their young readers.

A BENEFACTOR of parents trying to puzzle out the news retailed by their young in their letters and largely, it seems, confined to the exploits of the leading members of the first XV. and pointed observations on the personal economic situation of the writer, is Aubrey West, the banker, whom I met the day before these notes were written. For Aubrey West—in the two years since he happened to pick up a book by Mr. Alfred Fairbank on the Italian Renaissance, containing illustrations of the writing of Ludovico degli Arrighi, one of the scribes at the Vatican in the sixteenth century—has become an enthusiastic amateur of the beautiful Italian script. A revival of the lost art of beautiful writing—of which the Tudors, and particularly Queen Elizabeth I., were the great exponents—has opened up an entirely new world for many people, including Lord Cholmondeley, formerly the Lord Great Chamberlain, who, at the age of sixty-two, reformed (which is, I understand, the correct term) what was an undistinguished scribble into a beautiful Italianate hand. Now I see that the new calligraphers have formed themselves into a society to improve the handwriting of adults and schools; one of the first major steps taken being the designing of a pen which will provide the requisite thin and thick strokes. Eton and Harrow and other schools are staging competitions in calligraphy, and the standard of legible hand-writing will, one hopes, be raised throughout the country.

More power to the elbow, if one can say that, of Aubrey West and his friends. That request for 10s. should be much more immediately apparent in future, and perhaps not only the young can profit from the new/old movement. Following Lord Cholmondeley's example, and that of the late Lord Wavell and Sir Desmond MacCarthy, we can all improve our hands. I have a beloved godmother. I am sure she will not mind my revealing that in the days when I was at school her letters were first of all shaken for any enclosure, then scanned to obtain a general impression, and then placed in a locker for a day or two to mature—in the hope that her highly individualistic script might become thereby more legible!

THIS is the season, as I had occasion to remark here recently, of a steady crescendo of pre-Christmas lunches, dinners, public functions and parties. Also, I fear, of a steady increase in the output of public speeches. I must, however, give full marks to Lord Brabazon of Tara for his speech at the Motor Industry Research Association's annual lunch. Some months ago I commented upon the practised skill of an experienced politician like Lord Llewellin, who delivered himself at short notice of an exquisitely phrased speech on a subject of which previously he could have known nothing. At ten o'clock on the morning of the M.I.R.A. lunch Alan Lennox-Boyd's private secretary rang up the president to say that his Minister was in bed with laryngitis. Shortly before twelve, "Brab" was run to earth and induced to take his place. All I can say of the resulting speech is that if he had been polishing it for a week, it could not have been better.

In the same week, and in a very different medium, I heard John Langley speak at the Old Stoic dinner—a charmingly-phrased little effort which proved that some great golfers should be heard as well as seen more often.

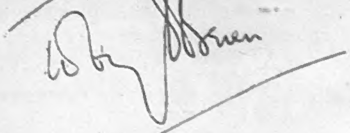
THE disappearance of Rosa Lewis of the "Cavendish"—she never forgave Evelyn Waugh for his far too faithful delineation of her as "Lottie Crump" in *Vile Bodies*—will leave no small gap in the London scene, even though Rosa had been ill for a very long time. There must be many a young-to-middle-aged man who can say with truth that he was educated at "Eton, the Guards and Rosa's," or "Harrow, Cambridge and the 'Cavendish,'" for I know of no more admirable post-graduate course than close acquaintance with the "Cavendish" could provide. Much has been written about Rosa's Robin Hood tactics. That is to say, of her habit of charging the young and impoverished nothing, or virtually nothing, and recouping herself through additions to the bills of the elderly and the wealthy. I myself remember staying there for a short while when I was very young and very poor. She charged me 25s. a week all in, which included champagne in that front room, lined with its photographs of "O.C.'s," at any hour of the day or night. I shall never know who was the unsuspecting donor of so much hospitality. Certainly my full bill must have been infinitely more than I was ever charged. Rosa never, in subsequent years, mentioned it, though occasionally, when she was well past the eighty-five to which she had some years before admitted, she used to peer at me and say: "'Ullo, dear. Ain't you that Mr. Corbett what owes me a little bill for champagne?" But then I have a feeling that "that Mr. Corbett" was the joker in Rosa's pack. However, there must be many of us to salute her generous, raffish, educative memory.

One of the better Rosa stories was of an occasion some years ago, when she had been critically ill. On her recovery she remarked: "Don't you ever get ill, dearie. For the last three weeks I've been at the gates of both 'eaven and 'ell, and you can take it from me they're both bloody!"—a remark which I think may baffle theologians to disentangle.

It was curious that at the same time Soho was robbed of another great character—the late Mrs. Stone, who was the grand old lady of the "Moulin d'Or" and the unofficial law-giver of the surrounding streets, and, I suspect, the severe disciplinarian of her two excellent middle-aged sons, George and Ernest. Throughout all bombardments she refused to move from the "Moulin d'Or," even when her bedroom was burnt out by incendiary bombs, and even when an unexploded bomb landed in the street immediately outside. I remember having an appointment to lunch there the morning after that particular blitz, but found the street cordoned off with the familiar yellow "Unexploded Bomb" notice. While I was wondering what to do about my lunch guest, George appeared in the door of the "Moulin d'Or" and waved to me to get over the rope and come along to the restaurant. "But what," I asked, not wholly without apprehension, "about the unexploded bomb?" "Oh, that's all right," replied George, "Ernest has taken it away."

I should perhaps add that Ernest was an air-raid warden, but even if he hadn't been, "Mama" would have seen to it that the bomb was not allowed to remain there to interfere with business!

I ALWAYS find it refreshing in Jewish friends that the best Jewish stories always come from them, and it is to one of them that I am indebted for the not unpleasant tale, in these days of restricted bank credit, of the bank manager who rang up a Mr. Levy in Singapore. The bank manager said that he was sorry to trouble him, but his account was overdrawn 2033 Straits dollars and 50 cents, and what was he going to do about it? "Meester manager," replied Mr. Levy, "vot vos the state of my account von year ago to-day?" After a pause to consult his books, the manager replied: "Well, I am glad to say that a year ago it was in a much healthier condition. Indeed, it was 3118 dollars in credit." To which Mr. Levy replied, in terms which all will applaud: "Meester manager, vos I ringing *you* up?"



GASTRO — LYRICS

By Justin Richardson

Escargots

The French are fast.
The snail is slow.
The French repast
Is escargots.

Field Marshal Sir William and Lady Slim sitting together in a corner of one of the thirteenth-century rooms at Stocketts Manor, Oxted, on the occasion of a party given in their honour by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Sutro.

A lovely cauldron of soup was waiting for early arrivals who had bravely battled through the fog of that week-end. Mrs. Sutro, assisted by her husband (*right*), is serving Mr. and Mrs. Ellis Irving.

Mr. E. R. T. Holmes, former captain of the Surrey cricket team, with Mrs. N. V. Farrell and her husband (*right*), both from New Zealand. Mrs. Farrell had a fashionable jet necklace.

Dancing past the spangled Christmas tree were Mrs. Roy Lowndes and Mr. Graeme Coull, both from New Zealand.

L. to r., Mrs. Robert Ferguson, Miss Julie Kingsford, Mr. David Kingsford, Mrs. C. Kingsford and Dr. and Mrs. N. N. Porterfield from New Zealand and now living over here.

FAREWELL PARTY TO SIR WILLIAM AND LADY SLIM

On December 6 the Governor-General Designate of Australia, Field Marshal Sir William Slim, and Lady Slim were guests of honour at Stocketts Manor, near Oxted, the home of their neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Sutro. The Sutros' annual party for New Zealanders (dating from the war, when they entertained New Zealand pilots) was made the occasion for a special farewell to the Slims, who are soon leaving to take up the new appointment. Stocketts Manor is a lovely old building with some of the rooms dating back to the thirteenth century and a splendid sixteenth-century barn. Mr. Sutro used to sheep-farm in New Zealand; now farms 120 acres over here.

Photographed by Swaebe.

Mrs. Margaret Boden (*left*), whose portrait of Miss Beryl Grey (*right*) is the frontispiece to this issue of *The Sketch*, with Mr. Stanley Grimm. In the background is Mr. Douglas Chandor's portrait of the Queen.

PARTY AMONG THE PORTRAITS

Various worlds converged at the very large party given by the Royal Society of Portrait Painters on December 2 at the Royal Institute Galleries, where they are holding their annual exhibition. Painters, politicians, soldiers, socialites and ballerinas were enjoying a buffet supper in one gallery, dancing in another and talking while they inspected the 500 portraits at this show, which includes works by all the most successful painters in this particular branch.

Specially photographed for "THE SKETCH" by George Konig.

In a cornerful of pictures are Mr. and Mrs. Philip Hicks. Brooding above them is her portrait, *The Old Man* (she paints under the name of Jill Hicks). Mrs. Hicks looked charming in her beautifully embroidered Spanish shawl.

L. to r., Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Fairbanks, the Duchess of Buccleuch and Mr. Simon Elwes, whose portrait of Mr. Douglas Fairbanks is on show at the exhibition.

Left: Looking at a portrait of Lord Leathers by Mr. Maurice Codner, *l. to r.*, Countess Alexander, Mr. Maurice Codner and Earl Alexander. *Right*: Miss Margaret King-Farlow and Mr. Henry Carr, admiring his portrait of her.

L. to r., the Hon. Mrs. Frederick Lowry-Corry, the Countess of Benckendorff, Mrs. and Mr. Nicholas Egon. They are all looking at his *Portrait of Barbayannis, the Fisherman*.

OUR BOOKSHELF

THE OWNER. By Inez Holden. (*The Bodley Head ; 12s. 6d.*)
MA-RAI-EE. By Chin Kee Onn. (*Harrap ; 12s. 6d.*)
PLOWMEN'S CLOCKS. By Alison Uttley. (*Faber ; 10s. 6d.*)
MURDER AND ITS MOTIVES. By F. Tennyson Jesse. (*Harrap ; 12s. 6d.*)

by RUPERT CROFT-COOKE

A STRANGE, ironic, rather moving novel is Miss Inez Holden's *The Owner.* Strange because it is so free from contemporary influence that one finds oneself remembering the early Rebecca West, or perhaps the novels, which seemed harshly realistic when they were published, of Gilbert Cannan. One is conscious that the characters in this book *are* characters, and not living people about whom one is reading, and yet they live, in a fitful, eccentric way, and their life as it is described is interesting. The story is of a man of the lower middle classes called appropriately Claude Charles Veneer, who manages to insinuate himself into the life of one of the great homes of England before the First World War. He goes to Trehawk Castle as a friend of the new owner and makes himself indispensable to him and to the Dowager so that, long before Lord Trehawk was killed in 1917 and the Dowager died of pneumonia in the same year, he has become an institution. Confusion over the identity of the next heir and a number of more or less timely deaths keep Veneer in occupation of the Castle for some years, so that by the time, in the 1930's, when the newest owner of the Castle tells him that he is no longer needed, he is so determined to remain in possession that he quietly murders the man who wants to eject him. The final scenes are bizarre and rather painful, but perfectly fitting to this story of snobbishness, greed and deceit.

EXACTLY antithetical are the merits of Mr. Chin Kee Onn's *Ma-Rai-Ee.* If Miss Holden's book is too much of a novel, this is far too little of one; indeed, it seems to be a piece of autobiography augmented with first-hand autobiographical material from others. It describes Malaya under Japanese occupation during the war, and in explanation of its title the publishers say : " 'Ma-rai-ee' was the name used for Malaya by the majority of the Japanese. To this day the word is employed by Malayans, partly in derision of their late occupiers, and partly out of gratitude to Providence for having survived the terrible time represented in their minds by 'Ma-rai-ee.' " As one reads this story of a resistance movement one realises that although the English in which Mr. Chin Kee Onn wrote it has been polished carefully and there are few if any words or expressions which are not idiomatic, yet there is a turn of phrase, or perhaps a way of seeing the thing described, which is wholly Oriental and might have sounded more convincing in the form of a literal translation from another tongue. The horror and torture scenes which seem to be inevitable in books of this kind are written in so matter-of-fact a way that they are almost dull, and this, too, raises a question of principle. For the writer seems to have been conscientiously determined to avoid anything like bad taste or "nastiness," a praiseworthy resolve, but one which renders his choice of subject rather unfortunate. But his portrait of a number of people working courageously for freedom against overwhelming odds has a certain nobility and the reader feels grateful to him for his honesty of purpose.

THE discursive book about country life, old rural customs and so on, usually with charming illustrations, has come to have an accepted place in publishers' lists, and Mrs. Alison Uttley's *Plowmen's Clocks* is a very good example of it. It is sad, I think, to find how often the writers of these books, and particularly the present one, have to turn to vanished things and childhood memories for their material and how little, comparatively speaking, they have to say in praise of the countryside of to-day. Only in her chapters on "Autumn" and "Flowers in Buckinghamshire" does the author notice the present, and even then it is "with a sudden stab of remembrance of the sunsets of childhood days." But this nostalgic evocation of a happier world is beautifully done, not in the grand manner of the full-dress essay, but in homely gentle prose which is delightful to read.

THERE is a good deal of talk nowadays about the decline of the detective novel, and if it is true that the whodunit is doomed, then the literature of actual crime, such as Miss F. Tennyson Jesse's *Murder and Its Motives,* will take its place in popular interest, I think. It is almost thirty years since the first edition of this book was issued, and it has now been revised and considerably enlarged. It is a fascinating piece of work. The author names six motives for murder, and gives an example of each. There is murder for gain, with that ruthless poisoner William Palmer as its odious exponent; murder for revenge, with, of course, the celebrated Constance Kent case cited. Constance has figured in other books on crime, but she is always an enigmatic and startling creature. The Querangel family are recalled to show an example of murder for elimination, and from many possibilities the author chooses the astonishing Mrs. Pearcey, who slew her lover's wife and baby, as a murderer for jealousy. Murder for the lust of killing has provided one very loathsome example since this collection was first made, but the case of Thomas Neill Cream of the 1890's seems, in retrospect, as unpleasant as any since. Only the last case, that of Orsini, who murdered from conviction, seems outside the scope of the collection, for although Orsini's unsuccessful attempt on the life of the Emperor Napoleon III. resulted in the death of eight people, his object was political, and not directed against his victims.

Authors of To-day

V. ELIZABETH TAYLOR

ONE of the most interesting of present-day novelists, Elizabeth Taylor was born in Reading in 1912, went to the Abbey School there until 1930, then lived at her home near High Wycombe and worked as a governess to young children. Afterwards she took a job as librarian in the local library. She married in 1936 John William Kendall Taylor and has two children—a son, Renny, and a daughter, Joanna. She claims to write her novels with children breathing down her neck and while answering questions, settling quarrels and cooking dinners. She has had five novels published : At Mrs. Lippincote's *(1945),* Palladian *(1946),* A View of the Harbour *(1947),* A Wreath of Roses *(1949), and* A Game of Hide and Seek *(1951). Each novel has received the Book Society's fiction recommendation;* A Wreath of Roses *was also the* Evening Standard *Choice. Her sixth novel,* The Sleeping Beauty, *will be published by Peter Davies next year.*

YOUR LIBRARY LIST

THE CUILLIN OF SKYE.
By B. H. Humble. (*Hale ; 30s.*)

FOXHUNTER.
The Story of a Champion, by Pat Landsberg. (*Todd ; 7s. 6d.*)

PIGS HAVE WINGS.
By P. G. Wodehouse. (*Jenkins ; 9s. 6d.*)

YOUR SIAMESE CAT.
By Hettie Gray Baker. (*Verschoyle ; 12s. 6d.*)

BODY IN THE BECK.
By Joanna Cannan. (*Gollancz ; 9s. 6d.*)
Good detection.

VENICE. THE LION AND THE PEACOCK.
By Laurence Scarfe. (*Hale ; 25s.*)
In every sense a handsome book.

PLANTS IN YOUR HOME.
By Violet Stevenson. (*Barker ; 12s. 6d.*)
Some excellent new ideas backed by practical instructions.

A DUTCHMAN AT LARGE.
By Johan Fabricius. (*Heinemann ; 21s.*)
If this book is something of an extravaganza so is the life-story it tells.

INVITATION TO SKI-ING.
By Fred Iselin and A. G. Spectorsky. (*Allen and Unwin ; 25s.*)
The title is too modest, for this is a complete handbook with instructive illustrations.

BEDS.
By Reginald Reynolds. (*André Deutsch ; 15s.*)
An amusing anthology sub-titled: "With Many Noteworthy Instances of Lying On, Under and About Them."

THE HOSTESS COOK BOOK.
By Helen Cox. (*Angus and Robertson ; 21s.*)
An Australian contribution to the literature of good living. Some very useful suggestions, many of them quite new.

R. S. SURTEES.
By Leonard Cooper. (*Arthur Barker ; 15s.*)
It is good to find that Surtees and his gay irresponsible novels are not being elbowed out, like the sport he loved. This good biography will be welcome to his many readers.

THE SHOCKING HISTORY OF ADVERTISING.
By E. S. Turner. (*Michael Joseph ; 15s.*)
Since his shocking histories of shockers and of social reform, Mr. Turner's exhaustive and amusing studies have themselves become an institution. This is perhaps the richest.

ONE-UPMANSHIP.
By Stephen Potter. (*Hart-Davis ; 8s. 6d.*)
People seem to find this "manship" gag of Mr. Potter's screamingly funny or intolerably boring. I find myself firmly in the second category, but for those in the first, here is a new book which seems much like the others.

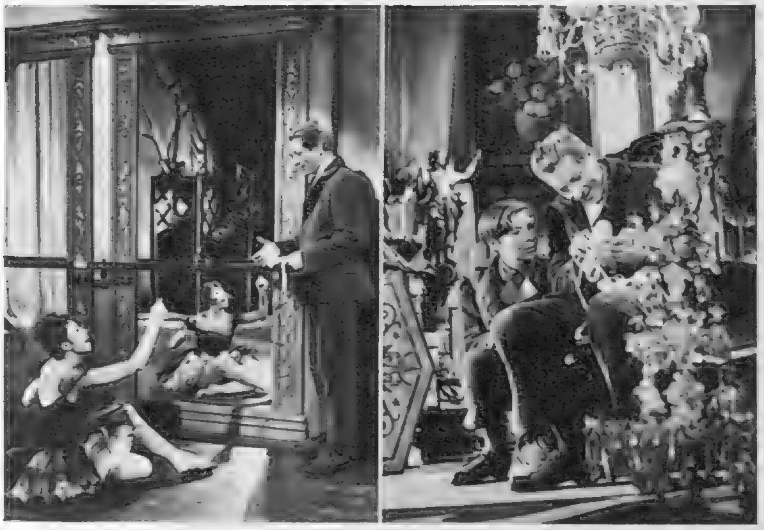
Photographed by Houston Rogers.

NO BROKEN CROWN . . .

. . . though whether Principal Boy Hy Hazell is called upon to break her crown once nightly as Jack in Emile Littler's *Jack and Jill* will shortly be apparent. The opening performance is due for this Wednesday (December 17) at the London Casino in the presence of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, in aid of King George's Fund for Sailors. Also in the pantomime are Charlie Chester as Simple Simon and Michael Bentine as the Crooked Man Twist. Miss Hazell has just returned from entertaining troops in Korea and Malaya.

1 Hans Andersen, the village cobbler of Odense, tells such wonderful fairy-stories that all the schoolchildren are frequently late for class through listening to his tales. The schoolmaster, enraged at Hans' following, decides that he will stand for it no longer and he lodges an official complaint.

2 He tells the burgomasters who, although charmed with Hans' way with children, have to agree that Hans must be banished from Odense. They confiscate the kite with which Hans summons the children to his story-tellings. Hans sets out for Copenhagen in company with Peter, his young apprentice.



5 Hans is released and is commissioned to make the shoes for ballerina Doro and falls in love with her at sight. Hearing her quarrel on-stage with her ballet-director husband Niels, he imagines that she is unhappily married.

6 But Peter discovers the truth that off-stage Doro is very much in love with her husband, in spite of their violent quarrels during rehearsals. At that time, though, he is unaware that Doro is the object of Hans' affections.

9 Later Hans returns to the property room at the theatre where he and Peter have taken lodgings. His thoughts turn to Doro and he day-dreams a fight between himself and her husband for the lovely ballerina's affection; then sits down to write a letter to her. The letter inevitably takes the form of a fairy tale.

10 His letter, in story form, is called *The Little Mermaid*; Peter finds it and while reading it, it blows away and gets into the hands of Doro herself, who interprets it as a new ballet. Peter chases the letter, discovers Doro is the girl of Hans' dreams, and tackles the difficult task of telling Hans the truth.

DANNY KAYE BRINGS HANS ANDERSEN TO THE SCREEN:

A "*Sketch*" Preview of Friday's Première

3 They finally reach Copenhagen, and are delighted with the wonderful city where they wander about the market square looking for a pitch to start work. Hans tries to attract attention towards his business by climbing a statue and addressing the crowd but is immediately arrested.

4 He is sent to prison, but even there his unquenchable spirit leads him to tell fairy-tales through the prison bars to children outside. Meanwhile, Peter has overheard that the Danish State Ballet Company urgently requires a cobbler to make special shoes for a temperamental ballerina.

7 Hans is still telling stories to children, and soon makes friends with a self-conscious little boy whose head, through illness, has been completely shaved so that other boys now laugh at him. Hans restores his confidence with the story of *The Ugly Duckling*.

8 The little boy's father is editor of the local newspaper and is so pleased with the transformation in his son that he publishes the story and commissions Hans to write regularly. Hans shows his astonishment at seeing his own name in print.

11. The ballet company go off on tour. Hans continues story-telling and making slippers for Doro. When the company return, they stage *The Little Mermaid*, but Hans is missing on opening night; through trying to deliver the slippers, Niels has locked him out and he misses the performance of his own ballet.

12 Niels, however, explains to Doro what happened, and she disillusions Hans in the kindest manner when, next day, he arrives with all the slippers. Realising that his love for Doro is hopeless, he leaves to return to Odense and to the life of magical story-telling which entrances children even to this day.

The title *Hans Christian Andersen* rather belies Samuel Goldwyn's Technicolor film, as it is not in any sense a biography of the world-famous teller of fairy-tales. Instead, yet another fairy-tale has simply and charmingly been woven round one or two excerpts from Andersen's early life. The film is due for its première at the Carlton, Haymarket, this Friday (December 19), and the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester have consented to attend.

Photographed by Paul Tanqueray.

FIGUREHEAD

This photograph lends Miss Shelagh Fraser much of the spirit of those surging ships' figure-heads which encouraged early explorers to cross uncharted oceans. Miss Fraser, film and stage actress, has appeared in over 500 broadcasts and television plays. She is also a spare-time writer; her latest work, written in collaboration with Billy Thatcher, is *Tai Lu Talking*, about a magic Siamese cat which has been serialised in the B.B.C. programme *Hullo There* and is also a popular feature on Children's Hour television. Shelagh Fraser plays all the female voices, including *Tai Lu*, the magic cat, herself.

NOV. 27.—DANSE À DEUX. Mr. Billy Wallace and Miss Fiona Campbell Walter, oblivious of the throng of other dancers, at the Ball for the Invalid Children's Aid Association at the Savoy.

NOV. 28.—CHEERFUL WEDDING. Lord Moynihan, former joint-treasurer and former chairman of the Liberal Party, married Miss June Hopkins, at Caxton Hall.

NOV. 28.—HURLINGHAM CLUB. The High Commissioner for Australia, Sir Thomas White, was guest of honour at the St. Andrew's night dinner and ball.

NOV. 29.—THE MUD WON. The annual St. Andrew's Day wall game at Eton was as much fun as ever, although it ended in a draw with no points made by either the Collegers or the Oppidans. Here are the opposing goalies, Peter Baring (*left*) and Andrew Sinclair.

DEC. 2.—GUARDS CHAPEL WEDDING. Captain L. P. Aubrey-Fletcher, late of the Grenadier Guards and son of Sir Henry and Lady Aubrey-Fletcher, married Miss A. M. Oliver at the Guards Chapel, Wellington Barracks.

Notes and Pictures from

Our Social Diary

FELIX KELLY, the painter of romantic studies of English country houses, which include Belton, Cliveden and Burley-on-the-Hill, is now exhibiting, at the Leicester Galleries, paintings of Spain (a colourful country where he spends a lot of time); Italy and America; also flashbacks to his birthplace, New Zealand, and some purely imaginary landscapes and fantasies of a dream world. Lots of interesting people were there to look on November 27, including Lœlia Duchess of Westminster, who loaned Mr. Kelly's painting of Send Grove; Lady Coryton; Mrs. Oliver Parker, whose collection of pictures is notable; Mrs. Ian Anderson and her lately married daughter, Mrs. Verner-Wylie; Mrs. Ian Farquhar; Mrs. John Fermor-Hesketh, whose home, Cosgrove Hall, Mr. Kelly has successfully painted; Sir Humphrey Clarke; popular young Mr. Peter Coates and Captain Philip Brutton. The mass of people at the private view were practically jostling the pictures off the walls and the delicate compositions of Mr. Kelly seemed to be in constant danger.

Later on, the grandeur of diaphanous dresses and diamonds was only matched by the price of tickets at £5 apiece at the Ball for the Invalid Children's Aid Association at the Savoy. This, though, included a champagne dinner, and everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves in an atmosphere of glitter and gaiety. Mr. Billy Wallace was Ball Chairman and his partners included Miss Caroline Kirkwood and Miss Fiona Campbell Walter. Lady Westmorland, among the very prettiest, and her husband Lord Westmorland, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Fairbanks, Prince Nicholas of Yugoslavia, and Mrs. Gerald Legge, with two little bows in her hair, were there; Lord Bathurst and his brother, Mr. George Bathurst, had a table with several young friends, at which Miss Davina Portman was quite the life and soul of the party. Debs. of last summer on the move again included Lady Deirdre Hare, Lady Carey Coke and Lady Perdita Blackwood, whose mother, Lady Dufferin and Ava, was lucky at the hoop-la table. This was a more peaceful occupation than dancing, as the floor soon became so crowded that, from a distance, it looked like a gently seething mass of rainbow-coloured lava.

DEC. 2.—A glistening and turreted white satin hat, worn by Mrs. Donaldson-Hudson, was one of the many attractive features at the party given by Mr. and Mrs. William King at their fascinating house, which is full of rare and delightful objects. Among people there were Mr. Christopher Ironside, co-designer with his brother Robin of the

(*Continued overleaf.*)

DEC. 3.—CRESTA CHAMPAGNE COCKTAIL PARTY. The usual Cresta Ball was replaced by a very successful cocktail party at Londonderry House. *Left: l. to r.*, Squadron-Leader Holliday, Lady Cunliffe-Owen, Mr. Michael Stoop and Mr. Eric Leigh-Howard. *Right: l. to r.*, Mrs. Moore-Brabazon, Captain Sir Basil Tangye, Mr. Leslie Gardener and Miss Monica Mitchell.

DEC. 5.—BACK FROM THEIR HONEYMOON. Lord and Lady Ogilvy, who were married on October 23, flew in from New York to London Airport to-day.

DEC. 5.—SWEDISH PRINCESS. Princess Margaretha of Sweden went to the Swedish Church Christmas Bazaar, and is here with Ambassador Gunnar Hägglöf and twelve-year-old Jan Hartznell.

DEC. 5.—SIAMESE EMBASSY. A reception for the birthday of the King of Siam was given by the Siamese Ambassador, Phra Bahidda Nukara (*left*), seen with his wife (*centre*) and daughter, Chirini (*right*).

lovely sets and costumes for Frederick Ashton's ballet *Sylvia*; Mrs. Christopher Ironside (Janey), who is always outstandingly smart and has her own dress-designing business; Philippe Julian, the clever young French artist and book illustrator, who illustrated Proust and many other books and their jackets (two of his latest jobs have been for Derek Patmore and Violet Trefusis); Mr. and Mrs. Alan Ross; Mr. Mark Ogilvie-Grant in a tartan dinner jacket; Mr. John Raymond, the critic; Mr. John Hill, the well-known interior decorator, with his wife and just-grown-up daughter, Josephine; Mr. Peter de Polnay, the novelist; Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Corcoran; Mrs. Jean Hugo, over from France and staying with her sister and brother-in-law Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Lancaster, who were also there.

Also on December 2 there was a charming little party given by Mrs. Fordyce-Birch at her flat in Knightsbridge, at which both her own and her daughter's generation were well represented. Among the young married people there were the Nigel Romers and the John Fearons; we also saw Air Commodore and Mrs. Hewat—she is the only daughter of Lord Erskine—Mr. and Mrs. Craigie, and the Backhouses, who came up specially from Kent.

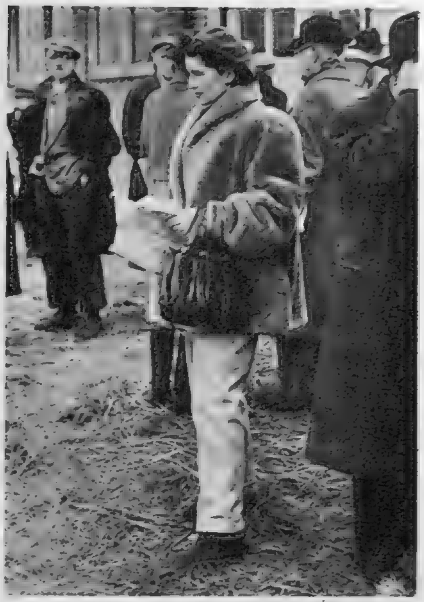
DEC. 4.—Before their party for their young son Peter, on December 9, photographs of which appear on page 585, David and Louise Fellowes gave one for themselves, to celebrate their return from Spain to their big flat in Kensington. A stream of people seemed to be arriving from 6.30 onwards, and we met many friends, including the Richard Blows (she is a daughter of Mrs. Richard Bethell and extremely good-looking like her mother); Mr. Anthony Bampfylde and his *chic* wife Brita, whose

Our Social

mother, Baroness Cederstrom, has gone to live in Jersey; Mr. John Innes, who has just become engaged to Miss Edwina Stanley, daughter of Lord Stanley of Alderley—she says they hope to be married on January 5 at St. Mark's, North Audley Street; Lady Inchiquin, over from Ireland with her younger daughter, Miss Grania O'Brien; Mrs. Philip Henderson, up from Sussex, talking to Mrs. Murrough O'Brien, whose elder son, Murrough, lately married Miss Joan Barnato; Countess Czernin, very smart in all-black with a snappy little toque hat. Literary people there were Mr. Derek Patmore, author, broadcaster and lecturer, and Mr. Peter Baker, publisher and Member of Parliament for South Norfolk.

Later that evening there was the Royal Society of Portrait Painters' party, before which Mr. and Mrs. Simon Elwes gave a dinner at the Connaught Hotel. Mr. Elwes is one of the distinguished sons of Lady Winefride Elwes; his wife was Miss Gloria Rodd, a sister of Lord Rennell. Among their guests were the Duchess of Buccleuch, Lord and Lady Lothian, Sir Gyles Isham, the twelfth baronet, who, having been President of the O.U.D.S. in 1925, adopted the stage as his profession when he came down from Oxford in 1926; Sir Arthur Penn, who served through

DEC. 3.—MORE TOASTING THE CRESTA. *L. to r.:* Major C. Dugdale, Mrs. Roland Gee and Captain O. Lerwill.



DEC. 4.—AT THE NEWMARKET BLOODSTOCK SALES. *Left* are Mrs. Mackinnon with Major S. C. Johnson; *right:* Lady Harrington. Everyone was very warmly dressed and needed to be!

DEC. 5.—AT THE GUILDHALL. *L. to r.*, Lady Alexander, Lord Alexander, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Gifford, among more than 1000 guests who went to a joint reception given by Commonwealth High Commissioners in honour of the Premiers and Ministers attending the Commonwealth Conference.

DEC. 8.—IN ROXBURGHSHIRE. Lord and Lady Ellesmere (*centre*), with Brigadier J. G. G. and Mrs. Cooper, of Templeknowe, St. Boswell's, at a meet of the Duke of Buccleuch's hounds at Mertoun, the Ellesmeres' home. Hunting was resumed to-day after the severe frost.

Diary (contd.)

both wars in the Grenadier Guards and became treasurer to the (then) Queen in 1946; Countess de la Falaise, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Nutting and Mr. and Mrs. Sandy Scratchley. Mr. Elwes is showing six portraits in the exhibition. (Photographs of the party appear on page 575.)

DEC. 5.—The fog cleared enough to allow people to get to the Sproughton Beagles Hunt Dance at Hadleigh Town Hall, but several got stuck on the way home and one exhausted party didn't make it until 8.30 a.m.! However, there can be few sports more toughening than beagling, especially in Suffolk, where the clay sucks at sodden boots and shoes. Mercifully hounds, or, rather, hares, when they run, almost invariably go round in circles, giving the plodders cheering glimpses.

There were plenty there to enjoy the gay night out at Hadleigh, including the Joint-Masters, Mr. Alan Gotlee and Mr. W. Morphy, who were both in good form. Mr. P. Hughes-Reckett was dancing with Miss Joanna Bland; Mr. Michael Evans, a regular week-end follower of the Sproughton pack, was dancing energetically; so was Mr. Roddy Freeman, who hunts with the Essex and Suffolk and was wearing pink.

Also on December 5 there was a ball given at Harmer Green End, Hertfordshire, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Graham Rowlandson, in aid of the Infantile Paralysis Fellowship. Among supporters were Lord Abergavenny, Lord Mackintosh of Halifax, Maj. Gwilym Lloyd George, Mr. Iain Macleod, Mrs. Skyrme, a daughter of Lord Lyle of Westbourne; Sir George and Lady Wilkinson, Sir Arthur Elvin, Sir Harold and Lady Parker, Sir Ambrose Keevil and Mr. Douglas James.

DEC. 6.—Christmas festivities are in full swing already in all directions; in Chelsea *A Joyous Pageant of the Holy Nativity* was presented in the Town Hall in the afternoon. People charted their way through the massive fog and every seat was filled for the Pageant, first produced in London by Mr. Charles Claye thirty years ago.

It is largely made up of a series of lovely tableaux based on Italian paintings, with Botticelli as the star. Suitable incidental music included compositions by Scarlatti and Byrd.

The players were all connected with the Church of St. Mary-the-Virgin, Sloane Square, and they go on from year to year "growing into" the various parts, beginning as cherubs at about four. One of the young ones suddenly had appendicitis last night (Friday), but Mr. Claye found a more than adequate substitute in time.

DEC. 7.—Week-ending in Devon we lunched with Major and Mrs. Ian Farquhar at their delightful farmhouse near Chudleigh, lent to them by Ian Farquhar's parents, Sir Harold and Lady Farquhar. Sir Harold has lately retired from the Diplomatic Service. The young Farquhars are soon moving into their new London house in Walton Street.

BRIDGET CHETWYND.

NOV. 26.—THE VICTORIAN BALL AT THE METROPOLE, DUBLIN. *Left:* Three maids of honour who sold buttonholes at the ball: *l. to r.*, Miss Maria Morogh Bernard, Miss Victoria de Rutzen and Miss Grania Wingfield, Lord Powerscourt's daughter. *Right:* Prince and Princess D'Ardia Caracciolo, from The Island, Co. Waterford.

NOV. 26.—ALSO AT THE VICTORIAN BALL. *Left:* Miss Veronica Rutledge, who hunts with the Galway Blazers, came up from the West for this gay party. *Centre:* Lady Kildare, chairman of the ball, and daughter-in-law of the Duke of Leinster, with Prince Sadrudin, younger son of the Aga Khan. *Right:* Lord and Lady Crofton, from Moate Park, in costumes which belonged to his great-grandparents.

Notes and Pictures from

Our Irish Social Diary

OLD Dublin was brought to visual life on November 25 for the Victorian Ball at the Metropole ballroom. The band, with humorous Irish inconsequence, was dressed in the uniforms of Old Vienna; a backcloth showed the throne-room in Dublin Castle in the days of the Lord Lieutenants. Gold-tasselled, cherry-red satin hung lavishly from the balconies: it was lent by Mrs. Randal Plunkett of Dunsany Castle. Mr. Seymour Leslie, brother of Sir Shane Leslie, organised the ball, which was in aid of the Adelaide Hospital. Most of the women wore enormously hooped dresses and had their hair in ringlets; the menu was selected by Mr. Leslie from an old book on the royal banquet menus of Europe.

Apart from the people in our photographs were Sir Basil and Lady Goulding—she was in cherry-red satin with panniers and a black lace shawl; is Sir Walter Monckton's daughter; Sir Walter Hankinson, British Ambassador, and Lady Hankinson; Mrs. MacCartney Filgate, in a pink and blue-striped satin dress which had not been worn for sixty-seven years; Major and Mrs. John Bonham, Major and Mrs. du Buisson, Miss Rose Talbot, who brought a party from Malahide Castle; Brigadier James Hennessy, wearing a very smart bottle-green period coat; Mrs. Hubert Preston, who brought a party of ten; Mr. Bill Hanson, Joint Master of the Rufford Foxhounds, over from England and enjoying some Irish hunting; and Captain Edward Boylan, on leave from his regiment.

DEC. 5.—The Duhallow hounds met at Creagh Castle, Doneraile, a very splendid setting. The ancient castle stands extremely high and the river Awbeg winds through woods below the walls; the hosts were Mr. and Mrs. Harold Black, and the Joint Masters of the Duhallow are Captain J. A. ("Rags") Hornsby and Mr. Harry Freeman-Jackson, the latter hunting hounds. "Rags," who is always superbly breeched and booted, is a former Master of the Woodland Pytchley; Harry is thought by everyone to be Ireland's best all-round horseman.

Among English people out for the four-mile point from Clogher Glen to Bowen's Court (home of novelist Elizabeth Bowen) were Mr. and Mrs. John Barnett from Leicestershire, who were on their honeymoon; Miss Croker from the Garth; and, now living in Eire, Mrs. Bowly, who used to be a Warwickshire regular; Major John Gray and his daughter Lydia; Miss Rosita Seldon-Truss, who whipped-in to the Cotswold during the war, and Miss Betty Ramsden, who used to hunt with the Bramham Moor. Also out were Mr. E. W. Hope-Johnstone, a former Master of the Westmeath, and his wife, who was the only woman riding side-saddle.

Left: Sarah Campbell, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alan Campbell, and one of the guests at Master David Fellowes' birthday party in Kensington on December 9, gloats over her chance to make a lovely muddle—and *right*, really goes to town making it, watched with awe by Timothy Fearon, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Fearon.

CHILDREN'S PARTY

The Hon. David and Mrs. Fellowes gave a perfectly splendid fancy-dress party for the fourth birthday of their son Peter on December 9. Their Kensington flat was rather like the Albert Hall after the Chelsea Arts Ball by the time the bright and very young things were ready to be led away to sleep it off.

Photographed by Swaebe.

Mr. Derek Patmore presents first prize to the Hon. Francis Prittie, whose mother, Lady Dunalley, is on the left; the Hon. Mrs. David Fellowes, the hostess, is in the centre.

Patrick Fearon helps his brother Timothy (the one with the lady friend, *above*) into a smart car.

The birthday king, Peter Fellowes, dressed as a Spanish bullfighter, blows out the candles on his cake.

L. to r.: Jane, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R. Chisholm; Sarah, daughter of Mrs. Oliver Beckett, and Jennifer, daughter of Colonel and Mrs. Lyall.

Eyes right for the camera is Christine Bampfylde, daughter of Captain and Mrs. Anthony Bampfylde, who is a daughter of Baroness Cederstrom.

All over now, with rug and blanket covering their gay fancy dresses. These are Benedetta and Virginia Grose, who went to the party as Christmas crackers, with gauze frills each end. They are the daughters of Mrs. David Grose.

★ AT THE THEATRE ★

with J. C. TREWIN

The Mousetrap

(*Ambassadors*)

THE only other play I know with this title is the one about the murder of Gonzago into which Hamlet, on a famous occasion, inserted a key speech. I can assure you at once that Mrs. Agatha Christie's play is nothing whatever like that. You would hardly expect it to be, and indeed Mrs. Christie would have scorned the simplicity of the earlier piece. Her *Mousetrap* is in the mood of *Ten Little Niggers*, though it cannot match that particular bit of artifice. There are, however—and very properly—murders (one off, one on), and we are required to guess the name of the murderer. In fact, to coin a phrase that I hope has not been thought up elsewhere, who done it?

In order to keep us happy and at the same time to make things more difficult, Mrs. Christie establishes her play somewhere in Berkshire in the howling depths of winter. I was much impressed by the weather in Berkshire; indeed, the next time I run down to Newbury I shall take with me a sledge and a team of huskies. Certainly things were so bad during the period of *The Mousetrap* that Richard Attenborough, representing the local police force, had to skim across to Monkswell Manor on skis.

The weather helped, of course. Nobody could get out of the Manor—which was an amateurishly conducted guest-house—and nobody could reach it. Also, the telephone was out of order: you will understand why when you get to the theatre (on skis or otherwise). So the murderer must be on the premises, and you can have the pleasure of choosing him from the guests at the Manor, from the host and hostess . . . on the whole, I had better refer you to the programme, for this is the trickiest job a dramatic critic can have to perform. If I were to tell you the name of the criminal, my life (to coin another phrase: they come easily to-day) would not be worth a moment's purchase. And I deplore the arch hint.

What, then, am I to tell you? Let me recap. You know about the author, the weather, the manor, the crime. I can add only that Peter Cotes has produced with enthusiasm, enjoying himself as much in the darkness as in the light; that there is a thoroughly sound cast; and that (this is for your consolation) I spotted the criminal, after some thought, during the first and only interval. That, however, is a critic's privilege. I can assure you, fellow-sleuths, that Mrs. Christie's problem is not easy.

The night is governed for me by the acting of Jessica Spencer, a player of much quality and poise who should be doing more than helping to animate a puzzle-play. But there are other first-rate performances: Mr. Attenborough's, Sheila Sim's as the hostess of the guest-house, Aubrey Dexter's and Allan McClelland's as two of a peculiarly annoying set of guests. Finally, I would say that, while this is by no means in the *Ten Little Niggers* class, it is well up to *The Hollow*; and that, if Mrs. Christie can continue to reel off these theatrical puzzles, she fills again a gap in the West End list about which addicts had begun to complain. I cannot say in honesty that her plot is persuasive. It requires the unravelling of a good deal of past history and, though I can swallow much in this kind of piece, some of the coincidences, I feel, would baffle an ostrich. Never mind. Here is the play. Here is the tune of *Three Blind Mice* (remember that nursery-rhyme?). Here is the blizzard. Here is Monkswell Manor. Here are my good wishes: the rest is with you, and forget all about *Hamlet*. That was my own decoration.

Sweet Peril

(*St. James's*)

I NOTICED a rather tart remark, by a celebrated critic, about the lighting of the play at the St. James's. The scene is Cornwall; and, according to the critic, who is a Northerner, it was odd that the place should have been lapped in eternal sunshine. It did not seem odd to me; but that may have been a matter of local loyalty. In any event, I thought with some envy of Laurence Irving's set as I toiled through London the other night in the clutch of a thick, damp, wet-stocking fog. An hour late, I arrived to lecture at Chelmsford, where the chairman cheered me by quoting the phrase, "Adaptability to weather," one of the tests devised by Ronald Searle in his ingenious phrenological chart of a dramatic critic.

TWO ACTORS, by Sharaku.
This print, which is in the British Museum, is reproduced from *Japanese Colour Prints*, with an introduction by Wilfred Blunt, just published by Faber and Faber at 12s. 6d.

Having adapted oneself—willingly or unwillingly—to the sunshine of Cornwall in *Sweet Peril*, what else is there? At the first interval I would have said "Not very much." But the second act was better, and although the third heaped the improbabilities like cream on jam, I contented myself by reflecting that Mary Orr and Reginald Denham might have written a far worse play about Cornwall.

In my early years as a critic there was a passion for "lounge-halls" in Kent or Surrey. But Cornwall grows now in popularity, either as a dumping-ground of bodies, a centre for domestic chat, or a lurid land of reach-me-down melodrama. One day we may get a piece about Cornwall and Cornish people written by a Cornishman. I shall ask then to be wheeled to the theatre, taking my ear-trumpet with me.

Sweet Peril is less about the Cornish than about the race of literary "squatters" in Cornwall. I have, though, to agree reluctantly that the writer (acted by Michael Denison), whose books must be insufferably bad, was brought up in the county—not, please, the Duchy—at an Adam-restored house near Land's End. He mourns his past life so much that at the drop of a hat, he will pick up a telescope and gaze soulfully towards the old home, Boskerris. We understand that during his career he was in love with an American girl who married an American publisher, and very wisely. So, instead, he married a Scots girl who wrote far better than he did. Together, when the play opens, they are eking out an existence in what someone calls "a mediæval cowshed" near Land's End, a place which is the usual size of any stage cottage and has the approved furnishings.

You may have guessed by now that the American publisher and his wife duly arrive in the far West of Cornwall. The comedy then turns itself into an ingenious foursome. How will the couples pair off? Will there be a reshuffling, or will they settle down as before? On the whole, I think it is better if you answered that question for yourself. As in *The Mousetrap*, I come hastily to the performance—murmuring only, as I pass, that Miss Orr and Mr. Denham believe, like most strangers, that you cannot live in Cornwall without eating turnip-pasties (no, no, *please*!), saffron cake and, though I refuse to credit it, figgy-duff. The dialogue, when not local-coloured, is often stiff; but there is occasionally a useful flick of wit, and the cast, at any rate, acts and speaks as if it were all the most reasonable stuff in the world.

The foursome is composed of Michael Denison, as the arty writer (I am quite sure that any young journalist on the local paper could have written his head off); Dulcie Gray as his charming, suffering wife; and two wholly delightful and modest Americans, Ron Randell and Margot Stevenson. Miss Stevenson, particularly, is an actress of much spirit and attraction. Also present, now and again, are Marie Löhr as a mother-in-law from the best circles, a nice woman who has to run down to Land's End to see what has happened to the boy; and George Woodbridge as a gardener who might so easily have been a Cornish Character full of Wise Saws, and who, thank heaven, is not. He has hardly any gay little regional quips, and he does suggest that, at one time or another, he has been across the Tamar, even as far down as Penzance. Norman Marshall has produced with the art we expect.

It is only a middling play, but it might have been a horror, and the dramatists have avoided this. You will enjoy the acting at the St. James's; and if you, too, are bothered about the sunshine over Land's End, you should not let yourself grumble too much in a drear-nighted London December.

PRESENT AND FUTURE

JOSÉ FERRER, the American actor-manager, is to stage several plays in London next year. One of them, due in the spring, has the odd name of *The Shrike*, a melodrama set in a public hospital, about a man destroyed by his possessive wife. Sam Wanamaker is to have over here the part Mr. Ferrer himself created in New York. The author is Joseph Kramm.

There are several other plays on Mr. Ferrer's list: *Stalag 17*, a drama of prison-camp life by Eddie Trzcinski and Donald Bevan; *Cabin in*

Sky; and George M. Cohan's *The Musical omedy Man*, in which Mr. Ferrer will appear mself.

This is rush hour in the London theatre. This Wednesday (December 17), at the Comedy Theatre, Geraldine McEwan and Leslie Phillips appear in *For Better, For Worse . . .*, on the theme of marriage, by Arthur Watkyn; on Thursday night Yvonne Arnaud returns, in Alan Melville's *Dear Charles* at the New, with Charles Goldner, Garry Marsh and Gerard Heinz; Hy Hazell and Michael Bentine lead the *Jack and Jill* pantomime at the Casino; *The Dancing Princesses*, adapted by Francis Dillon from Grimm, begins at the Embassy; and *Sleeping Beauty on Ice* skates into the Empire Pool, Wembley. On Friday *Maria Marten* arrives at the Arts.

Sir Ralph Richardson, after his arduous Shakespearean season at Stratford-upon-Avon, and the dramatist, R. C. Sherriff, are again in theatrical partnership. Sir Ralph had one of his firmest successes in *Home at Seven*, Sherriff's play of a man who lost his memory. Now he is to act, for Tennents, in *The White Carnation*, a comedy that Sherriff has written for him especially. It begins at Brighton on January 5.

David Hughes, the singer, and the comedians Archie Robins, Leslie Randall and Eddie Vitch, have joined *Paris to Piccadilly* at the Prince of Wales's in place of Norman Wisdom, who goes to pantomime. . . . On January 21 Paul Vincent Carroll's new Irish comedy, *The Devil Came from Dublin*, will open a three-weeks season at the enterprising Embassy Theatre. . . . Lionel Dunn is to succeed Nugent Monck as director of the famous Maddermarket at Norwich.

THE WANDERING OTHELLO

Mr. Anthony Quayle, a director of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, is due to sail for the Antipodes next Saturday (December 20), with a Stratford company of thirty-three, to play *Othello* in New Zealand and Australia on a 37-weeks tour, planning to continue the performance at Stratford on their return in 1954 and then to take it over to America and Canada at the end of the Stratford season for a further six months. Those strangling hands, a-quiver in the photograph, will certainly get plenty of practice. Mr. Quayle will be accompanied on his travels by his wife, Dorothy Hyson, and their two young daughters.

Photographed by Angus McBean.

The 18th Century revived at a Costume

THE eighteenth century returned in all its pomp and glory for the costume ball at the Savoy on December 8, and one couple were even reported to have arrived in a "hansom." People who had spent endless trouble getting their costumes together for this ball in aid of the R.A.D.A. Vanbrugh Memorial Theatre Fund were evidently made of stern stuff, for not even the dense fog could keep any of them away. The powdered wigs and panniers of the aristocracy were well to the fore, and there were also some poor relations from the French Revolution. These dancers from another age appeared not at all disconcerted when the music suddenly changed from whirling old-fashioned waltzes to Raspers and Charlestons—shattering the sedate atmosphere, slightly foggy even indoors!

Specially photographed for "THE SKETCH" by George Konig.

Coat tails and skirts swirled splendidly in this lively waltz. These two R.A.D.A. students in satin, wigs and patches are Mr. Alexander Garroz and Miss Pauline Stroud.

Richard Attenborough, not a bit disguised by his get-up, with Sir Kenneth Barnes, principal of R.A.D.A., remaining determinedly himself, Sheila Sim and Kay Hammond.

Mr. Robin Mirrlees as Fouquier-Tinville, public prosecutor of the French Revolution, with Miss Davina Portman.

Mr. Timothy Renton, lavishly whiskered to go with his costume, provided almost an anachronism with the modern gown of Miss Chelsey Lloyd.

The Hon. Sarah Rothschild dancing with Mr. Dominic Elwes, who was dressed as Louis David, the painter.

Ball to help the Vanbrugh Theatre

There were exotic blackamoors taking peoples tickets at the door and handing round hot chocolate later in the evening. Guests arriving here are Mr. Gerry Ackroyd and Miss Anne-Louise Worthington-Evans.

The reception committee awaiting the guests was, *l. to r.*, Mrs. Bill Fenton, Mrs. Remington-Hobbs Miss Joyce Grenfell and Miss Celia Johnson.

"Beau" Harold Warrender, actor brother of Lord Bruntisfield, was Master of Ceremonies, and is here announcing Mr. and Mrs. Geoffrey Lotery, who were dressed as Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette.

L. to r.: Mrs. John Wedgwood as Sarah Wedgwood, Mr. John Wedgwood as Josiah Wedgwood, Mr. Borch-Madsen, Mr. John Davenport, Mr. John Metcalf, Mrs. Borch-Madsen and Mr. Martin Wedgwood as John Wedgwood, Josiah's son.

Miss Veronica Hurst, keeping to the present day, with Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, who is just back from America.

Lady Deirdre Hare, daughter of the Earl and Countess of Listowel, dancing with Mr. Ilay Campbell.

Both in the costume of the French Revolution were the Hon. Caroline Grenfell and Mr. Kerry St. Johnston—but was the dance a minuet?

NOV. 24.—The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh smile happily as they leave the Royal Festival Hall after the St. Cecilia Festival Concert, at which Sir Malcolm Sargent conducted.

NOV. 25. — Princess Margaret, well wrapped-up in regal ermine, departing from Her Majesty's Theatre, where, with a small party, she had been to see *The Innocents*.

NOV. 25. — The Queen, wearing a leopard-skin coat, was driven from Buckingham Palace *en route* for Sandringham, where she joined Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

NOV. 27.—*Left:* The Duchess of Gloucester opened the new Gardeners' Country Home at Horton, Bucks, and here hands a donation which she had received to Penelope Hellyer. *Right:* That same evening the Duchess went to the première of the film *Retreat, Hell!* at the Warner Theatre, in aid of the Royal Marines' Association and the Sea Cadet Corps.

NOV. 27.—Princess Margaret visited Newcastle to launch the new ship *Maori* at the Walker naval yard of Vickers-Armstrong.

DEC. 3.—The Queen gave a large dinner-party to Commonwealth Prime Ministers, Ministers and their wives at Buckingham Palace. *L. to r.:* Mr. D. S. Senanayake (Ceylon), Sir Godfrey Huggins (Southern Rhodesia), Mr. S. G. Holland (New Zealand), Mr. Winston Churchill, Her Majesty the Queen, Mr. Robert Menzies (Australia), Mr. L. S. St. Laurent (Canada), Mr. N. C. Havenga (South Africa), Mr. Khwaja Nazimuddin (Pakistan), and Mr. C. D. Deshmukh (India).

Occasions From

NOV. 26.—*Left :* The Duke of Edinburgh, bowler hat in hand, shakes hands with Lord Douglas of Kirtleside as he leaves London Airport for Malta. *Right :* He apparently made a quick change into naval uniform on the way, for on arrival at Malta he took the salute at a march-past of the guard of honour.

NOV. 30.—The Duke of Edinburgh discusses a polo game, in which the Navy lost by half-a-point to the Gunners, with Lady Pamela Mountbatten and, *second from the right,* Admiral Earl Mountbatten.

DEC. 1.—The Queen, again wearing leopard, but this time with the addition of a hat, returned to Buckingham Palace by car after her few days' rest at Sandringham, with Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother sitting beside her.

DEC. 1.—Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother visited the head-quarters of the London Scottish, of which she is Honorary Colonel. She unveiled the 1939-1945 Regimental War Memorial, and here inspects the guard of honour.

DEC. 4.—The Queen had lunch at the Bank of England, and is seen with the Governor, Mr. C. F. Cobbold. Happy comment by a banker: "They have a Sovereign there this morning worth her weight in gold."

DEC. 7.—The Queen, followed by the Duke of Edinburgh, leaves Mersham Parish Church, in Kent, accompanied by the Rector of Mersham, the Rev. J. Edinger, after Sunday morning service. They were staying for the week-end with Lord and Lady Brabourne at New House, Mersham.

the Royal Diary

SPORTING BACKGROUND

By LOUIS T. STANLEY

A PUNITIVE JOCKEY CLUB RULE

THE review on the doping situation prepared by the Stewards of the Jockey Club will be read with interest. As matters stand at present the situation is unsatisfactory from all points of view. The bone of contention centres round the rule of the Jockey Club which reads :

If in any case it shall be found that any drug or stimulant has been administered to a horse for the purpose of affecting its speed in a race, the licence of the trainer of the horse shall be withdrawn, and he shall be declared a disqualified person.

The injustices inherent in this ruling are many. The question of a trainer's responsibility must be considered. The fact that under Jockey Club Rules no trainer lost his licence in the 1952 season does not mean the trouble has ceased. It merely emphasises the fact that a trainer has to think twice before he jeopardises his living. If he be dissatisfied with the running of one of his horses and ask the Jockey Club to order a saliva test after a race, he stands to lose his licence should the test react to dope. It is absurd that a trainer who suspects that one of his horses has been "nobbled" should have to resort, for his own safety, to a private inspection. Last year Lord Rosebery issued a statement that one of his horses had been doped to prevent it winning. Under the existing rules a Jockey Club ordered test of the horse referred to by Lord Rosebery would have resulted in the licence to train being withdrawn from Jack Jarvis, a trainer of the utmost integrity. It is essential for doping to be stamped out. At the same time the special security measures introduced by the Jockey Club must not penalise innocent parties who are anxious to co-operate.

The Gimcrack Dinner

Every year the Gimcrack Dinner at York produces a constructive speech dealing with current Turf affairs. This time the diners received double measure, for *Bébé Grande*, the winner of the Gimcrack Stakes, was owned in partnership by Jack Gerber and Colonel Jack Scott. At the time of writing there is no indication what themes they will develop, apart from the rumour that Mr. Gerber will deal mainly with racing from the owner's viewpoint, plus a proposal that extra money could be given to racing by the Tote. If the suggestions are sound, I shall be interested to see if they become adopted. I remember last year that the guest of honour was Ray Bell *in absentia*. He was unable to cross the Atlantic for the occasion. Instead, he recorded his speech. Unfortunately he overlooked that small formality known as the British Customs. The record was held up and the speech had to be read by Lord Hotham. The gist of his speech was to install loud-speaker commentaries on every race, plus the advice to the authorities to take the racing public more into their confidence. Major R. Macdonald-Buchanan, a Steward of the Jockey Club, responding to the toast of "The Club," said that experiments were being carried out in connection with broadcasting and racing. He anticipated that in the near future a method would be devised by which people in the outer rings on race-courses would be brought into the picture. That was twelve months ago. I would be interested to know how far those promises have been implemented.

A Matter of Sex

I have always been biased about women who imitate men in sports of an essentially masculine nature. I prefer women to look like women, not liked bulbous Amazons in bursting shorts. No one can stop females chasing a football about a field, belting each other with outsize boxing gloves, or grappling like bears in wrestling bouts. Maybe it satisfies some inner urge, but from a man's point of view it does nothing for them. Rowing I felt to be a borderline case. I would not go so far as Lord Moncrieff when he aired his views about ladies playing golf. He had no objection to ladies playing at set times when the male golfers were feeding or resting, but "at other times—must we say it ?—they are in the way." It is a pity that the noble peer did not live long enough to see Mildred "Babe" Zaharias in action. His views would have altered as mine have in part about women rowing. The reason is due to watching the tenth official Women's Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge. I am not going to say that we saw a flawless exhibition. There were several faults. There was a tendency to lean away from the oar. One girl was inclined to row her blade into the water. The blade was only half-covered at the start—a major failing in the middle of the boat, where the main driving power must come. Another girl's back collapsed in a bow instead of remaining flat, as it should throughout the stroke. There was also too much flurry and splash of water, not when the crew was coming back, but as it was coming forward. By comparison a first-class crew leaves practically no white water. The "pud" mark left on the surface is dark and remains dark through the stroke.

In spite of these blemishes, both crews rowed lustily and with stout heart. Victory went to Cambridge by a comfortable margin, and so ended what may prove to be the last of these races. Apparently the Oxford University W.B.C. will have to disband through lack of funds. The non-rowing females of the University have declined to support them to the tune of an extra shilling a head for their expenses. The outlook in Cambridge is brighter. The C.U.W.B.C. has had its quota of ridicule and scorn, but the opposition seems to be less active ; in fact, for the first time the C.U. Coxswains' Society have invited the C.U.W.B.C. coxes to become members.

These girls deserve encouragement, for any form of official recognition has been reluctantly conceded. An early rule of Newnham College read : "Any form of boating on the river is to be regarded as an expedition for which leave must be asked and a chaperon is required." In 1893 a few students succeeded in getting permission to go on the river unchaperoned. The Newnham College Rowing Society was formed from which sprang the Cambridge University Women's Boat Club. I was amused at the 1911 dilemma. The girls wanted to wear shorts and socks, instead of gym-tunics. The request was refused because the Press would immediately feature the girls with bare knees, and such publicity would prejudice the voting on degrees for women which was to happen at the end of that term. I feel it is just as well that "Gussie" Moran never had a Cambridge education !

"This one I caught in the back garden !"

A Golfing Check

Quite recently I had occasion to examine a set of golf clubs which a friend of mine had brought back from America. They were perfect clubs, beautifully balanced and finished, and calculated to make any golfer envious. Only one point did I raise. I questioned whether the face markings were legal. We checked and found that by the standards laid down by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, the irons were illegal. Quite unwittingly the owner of many a set of clubs is in the same category. The ruling lays down that each groove must not be wider than about $\frac{1}{32}$ in., and the distance between the grooves must not be less than three times the width of the groove. In other words, one groove and the surface between the grooves should measure about $\frac{1}{8}$-in. Punch-marks on a club are permissible provided that the markings do not exceed a diameter of $\frac{1}{16}$ in. The maximum number of punch-marks is dependent on the diameter of the impression. So now you know. All that remains is the simple business of checking. Your conscience will do the rest !

The Sportsman's Bookshelf

THE FAULKNER METHOD. By Max Faulkner. (*Hutchinson ; 15s.*)

. . . A new type of instructional golf book by the 1951 Open Champion. The Questionnaire Section is particularly useful. It gives virtually a remedy for every golfing fault. Profusely illustrated with action photographs.

40 YEARS IN FOOTBALL. By Ivan Sharpe. (*Hutchinson ; 12s. 6d.*)

The author, a well-known International footballer, tells the story how Association football developed, spread over seventy countries, to become what he describes as the world's most popular pastime.

EQUITATION, by Henry Wynmalen (*Country Life ; 18s.*), and THE YOUNG RIDER, by "Golden Gorse" (*Country Life ; 25s.*)

Revised editions of two first-class books. *Equitation* offers incisive instruction in first principles and elementary training, and an excellent exposition of advanced and high-school riding. *The Young Rider* is written specially for children who are at the beginning of their riding careers and for those who are teaching children to ride.

From "Peter Arno's Sizzling Platter" (Robert Hale; 12s. 6d.)

"THANK YOU, BOYS. I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE."

TALKING OF TELEVISION

By CYRIL BUTCHER

We Shall See The Coronation After All

WITH the Season of Goodwill hard upon us, it is pleasant to be able to begin in an appreciative vein. So on behalf of the viewing readers of *The Sketch* we would like to express our respectful thanks to her Majesty the Queen, the Earl Marshal, the Duke of Norfolk, the Coronation Joint Committee and the Coronation Committee for the reversal of the earlier decision to ban the televising of the actual Coronation ceremony. It is a graceful gesture to bow to the wishes of the people. The storm of protest that greeted the earlier decision might well have marred the joyful and loyal spirit of the country at Coronation time, but now no one need be left out and everyone can join their homage and well-wishes to those of the distinguished Abbey gathering.

There is hopeful news, too, of the projected television link-up with France, Western Germany, Holland and Denmark for this great occasion. French technicians have been busily conferring with ours on the subject of the line-converter which is to be installed at Cassel. Last summer, for the Franco-British Week, it may be remembered the B.B.C. developed an ingenious but basically simple device—also stationed at Cassel—by which pictures on French definition standards became available on British standards. At its simplest, it was a British camera taking a picture from a French screen. The complications attending the refinement of the results are far too technical for us to deal with here. Now the process is to be reversed at Cassel, and from this point it is hoped that the other European countries will be able to "tap in." Tests are to begin within the next few weeks, so there is a sporting chance that everything will be working smoothly by June.

It seems a shame that all this effort should go into the networking of a limited number of programmes. Surely it is time for the Cassel converter, working on a two-way basis, to be made a permanency. The regular interchange of programmes between the five countries would be not only a welcome but an important step toward international goodwill. Of course, it would cost money, but so does inter-State bickering, which television could do a lot to obviate.

A "NATURAL" for an international hook-up would have been George R. Foa's production of *Faust*. Gounod's masterpiece must have been played in more countries than any other opera, and the fact that it was sung in English would not have made much difference.

Mr. Foa really did a splendid job. At last he seems to have solved the problem of teaching singers how to act for the intimate medium, while at the same time allowing them a free hand to develop their vocal qualities. In this respect it is our pleasant duty to put John Lanigan on record as one of the greatest Fausts we have ever heard—and we have heard plenty! Mr. Lanigan is that rare creature of our times: a first-rate exponent of *bel canto*, which is the way Gounod's broad, sweeping melodies should be sung. With Patricia Bartlett as Marguerite we were not quite so happy. Her lower and middle range was lovely and her acting was well above average. But when she came to those trying top notes, her singing technique was not entirely up to scratch, and the resulting sounds were not always pleasant or true. The other main rôles, Siebel (Anna Pollack), Valentine (John Cameron) and the magnificent bass part, Mephistopheles (Michael Langdon), were safe in the hands of their performers and beautifully sung.

Now, Mr. Foa, can we look forward to some of the greater works in the operatic repertoire? Perhaps *The Magic Flute, Don Giovanni, Aïda, Othello*, or even make a start on Wagner? Ambitious suggestions, but the time will come.

Adam's Apple, by N. C. Hunter, would probably have left an international audience floundering, because it is wildly and typically English. All the same, it was one of the most enjoyable evenings we have ever spent with the television screen. (Yes, we still manage to combine work with personal pleasure.) This play would not have disgraced Wilde, and would have been worthy of Barrie at his best. It is set late in the nineteenth century, when intelligence and brains were the last things that were expected of back-benching Members of Parliament—in fact, were highly undesirable. But the eating of a magic apple suddenly transforms the amiable, blundering country squire, who is about to make his début in the House, into an omniscient ball of fire, with the most disastrous and hilarious results. It was a wonderful opportunity for Roger Livesey, and it was wonderfully taken; a great performance by a great actor. Running him comfortably close was another one by John Stratton as the squire's meek secretary, who is also metamorphosed by the apple. A third came from Agnes Lauchlan in a delicious caricature of the English Lady.

ON the documentary side there was another of Jeanne Heal's tactful masterpieces in *Case Book*. This time she interviewed a man who had spent a period in a mental home. It could easily have been a very painful occasion but both Miss Heal and the interviewee took the subject in a firm, unselfconscious grasp, with the most impressive result.

Less happy was *To Save a Life*. This documentary subject, a typical night in one of London's hospitals, has already been done extremely well in a previous programme. This one somehow managed to miss the intense humanity which made the first such a success. It was horrific without sufficient compensating personal interest.

The *Pickwick Papers* serial got off to a medium start. The adaptor, Robert Christie, and the producer, Douglas Allen, had obviously been at great pains to establish a truly Dickensian atmosphere. But atmosphere is as far as they got. The telling of the Rochester incident was messy and the humour of the famous duel fell very flat. However, we hope for better things as the series progresses and we shall follow the further adventures of George Howe, as a very satisfying Pickwick, with great interest.

It is a pity that *They Came by Night* was loudly trumpeted as a thriller. If Barré Lyndon's play had been described less dramatically, one would have forgiven the slow pace, the occasional *longueurs*, and been grateful for one or two exciting sequences. As it was, we expected to be thrilled and, largely due to lack of pruning of the script, we weren't. There was a charmingly bewildered performance by Anthony Nicholls and a satisfyingly vicious one by Ann Summers as a gangster's moll.

Introducing . . .

VI. CECIL McGIVERN

HERE is a figure who is rapidly becoming legendary. Everyone at Lime Grove and others connected with television talk about Cecil McGivern, Controller of Television Programmes. But few of them ever talk to him.

That, we are safe in suspecting, is largely his own wish. Because we have often noticed that he is not happy with people he does not know well; and if you want to see him at his most miserable, you can do so at any of the large official functions that the B.B.C. stage, from time to time.

But do not run away with the idea that Cecil McGivern is in any way out of touch with his staff or anybody who remotely affects television programmes. Producers, directors and designers know all too well that he has a firm and active finger on the pulse of all their activities. He sees nearly every programme and if, in his opinion, anything is not done as well as it should be, the Blast comes into operation. This takes the form of a minute-note couched in such sharp, spiky, adjectival terms as to leave the offender in no doubt of the Controller's displeasure. Conversely, he is often known to hand out a soothing pat on the back to the producer of a programme which he feels has earned an undeserved rocket from the Press.

Cecil McGivern is a perfectionist. And in pursuit of that perfection he flails himself even more severely than others. We remember, for instance, after the brilliant broadcast of Macbeth *from Glyndebourne, congratulating him on a wonderful evening, "Yes, but if only we could have done it in colour!" he replied, with a passion that made his voice tremble. "It's the tragedy of television that the capabilities of our producers always run ahead of their technical equipment."*

That sort of man may not be the easiest to live with, but one to bring about results. That's all Cecil McGivern cares about.

Watching Brief

ON Thursday evening (December 18) Philip Harben will introduce the Yule spirit into his exciting broadcasts, for he will show you how to cook a Christmas dinner.

* * *

Then on December 20, the toughest and the gentlest of the arts will combine in a play, *The Boxer and the Ballerina*, by Elizabeth Keen and John Macadam. These two characters will be played by Patric Doonan and Joan Greenwood, who during the course of this fantasy will dance a ballet with David Paltenghi to the music of Don Gillis. Dennis Vance is producing.

* * *

Now we get to Christmas itself. On Christmas Eve there will be a Nativity play, *Time to be Born*, a new ballet by John Cranko, *Christmas Party*, and excerpts from *Jack and Jill* at the London Casino.

* * *

Christmas Day will include a production of *1066 and All That* and another of those Television parties, given in one of the studios. Not very inspired programming.

* * *

Boxing Day will bring us Ivor Novello's last musical comedy, *Gay's the Word*, with the one and only Cicely Courtneidge in the same riotous star part she played on the stage.

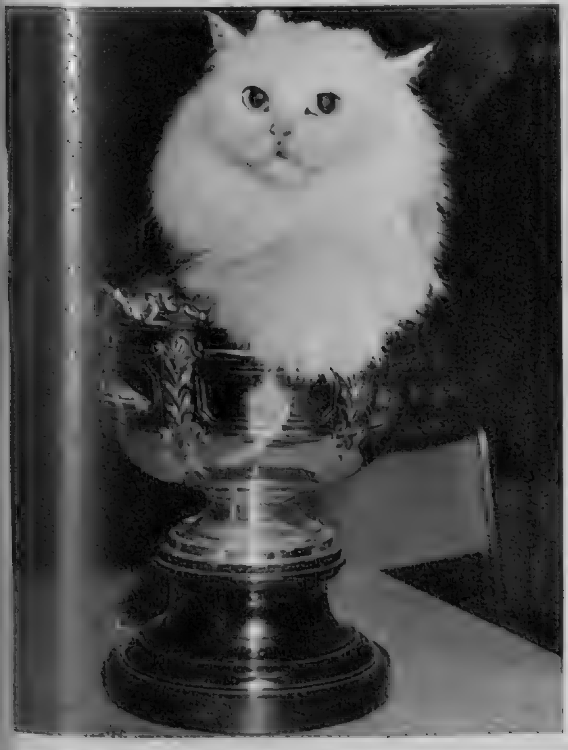
WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO . . .

GODFREY PHILIPP (second time ; see *Sketch* Jan. 2, 1952) : For repeating an earlier triumph in an even more difficult rôle.

Godfrey, a sixteen-year-old schoolboy of Sloane School, Chelsea, has followed his Jessica of last year by playing Imogen in *Cymbeline*, a part which necessitates acting a girl who is impersonating a boy, and is made even more difficult by the first four acts being Shakespeare's and the last Shaw's.

BRUCE THE GREAT DANE : For a dogged approach to Rush Hour on the Underground.

Bruce is a regular traveller on the Bakerloo line. He 's as good as the next man when it comes to wily negotiations for a seat, and heaves his big haunches neatly up on to the one beside his master, Mr. G. George, who, however, always turns him off if anyone objects.



THIEPVAL SNOWCLOUD : For taking determined possession of the Champion's Cup—which had been awarded to her anyway.

Thiepval was taking no chances. Having just been invested by the National Cat Club with the title "The Cat of the Show," she proceeded to warn off all her peers with a hint of easily unsheathed claws.

GEOFFREY DUKE : For reaching a notable milestone in a brilliant career of racing on wheels.

Geoffrey Duke, famous motor-cycling champion who has just announced his intention of changing to motor-racing, recently rounded off a notable career on two wheels by being awarded the Segrave Trophy for " the most outstanding demonstration of the possibilities of transport by land, air or water." Sir Algernon Guiness (*left*), Chairman of the R.A.C., made the presentation.

THE STALLS are accustomed to the sight of certain people who regularly occupy more or less the same position in the front rows at first nights, so that it was not surprising to find at least some of these regulars at the first night of *Sweet Peril* at the St. James's Theatre on December 3, when our two photographs were taken. Here, before the curtain rose, are *l. to r.*, Lady Sterling; Rose Marchioness of Headfort; her daughter, Lady Millicent Taylour; Mr. and Mrs. Edward Sutro; Mr. Campbell Williams and Sir Louis Sterling.

SOME REGULAR

Specially photographed for "THE SKETCH"

FIRST - NIGHTERS

Harold White, F.I.B.P., F.R.P.S.

THE GALLERY is the sounding-board of a play's success or failure, and almost as though to record the fact, there is a gallery first-nighters' association, of which many people in this typical early queue are members—some of them had even been to the first night of a try-out in Oxford the night before. Heading the queue are Miss L. Rayner and Miss E. Seymour ; behind them are Mr. Clifford Hicks and Mr. Terry Teasdale ; then come Mr. Leslie Bloom (*left*), president of the Gallery First-Nighters, Miss Beatie, Mrs. Lowden (*barely visible*) and Mrs. Edwards (*extreme right*).

At the Torquay control point in the recent *Daily Express* 1200-mile rally *l. to r.* are Mr. F. S. Craxford, Mr. Eric Burt, owner of the Healey Sports behind, Mr. Cole and Mr. Geoffrey Gould.

RELIABILITY UNDER STRESS—3280 miles in just under four days—from Oslo to the Portuguese frontier—in ice and snow and at an average speed throughout of 50 m.p.h.; that was the achievement of Stirling Moss, seen here examining an ice-clogged wheel, Leslie Johnson, J. Cutts and D. Humphrey in a recent test run with a Humber *Super Snipe*.

THE WORLD OF MOTORING   By WILLIAM HARTLEY

Shameful Taxation . . . Points About Premium Petrol . . . Part Exchange Prices Punish Careful Owners . . . Purchase Tax Rumours

THE coming year will be an interesting one for all motorists. New factors will enter into the whole business of owning a car, although for those of us who motored in the 'thirties we shall simply be going back to those well-remembered days. We start right away with a new method of taxation, with a flat rate, and all connection with engine size done away with, which is no bad thing. One must have some sympathy for those owners of low-powered cars who will now have to pay higher licence fees, but, for many, it will be a relief for which we should be thankful.

On the other hand, we motorists are still paying far more than our fair share of the annual bill for running the country, most of the money we pay being diverted to finance schemes not even remotely connected with motoring. I was very pleased to see that Mr. R. Gresham Cooke, director of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, added his voice to the growing plea for fairer treatment. Speaking in Glasgow recently he pointed out that out of £340,000,000 of motor taxation, the Government only put back £33,000,000 into the roads! He went on to point out that roads are the conveyer-belts of industry. Now how true that is. And when one considers the importance of the motor industry and the part that road transport plays in the life of the country, the level of taxation carried by motoring is shameful in the extreme. I still wonder why the combined voice of all interested is not strong or loud enough to get results. Maybe we don't all shout at the same time, or with the same theme. But it is good to see the makers, as represented by Mr. Gresham Cooke, coming along with their view.

IN a few weeks time we shall have at least one more freedom in that we shall be able to choose the brand and grade of petrol that we buy. I have been seeking details as to the quality of the premium grades, but the makers are all reluctant to give a definite answer beyond saying that it will be very good, and better than anything we have ever been able to buy from pumps in this country before. I suspect that each of them is waiting to see what the others produce. Whatever it is in octane value, we are glad it has come at last.

I rather suspect there will be some motorists in trouble, however, and at least some thought should be given to the subject. As a basic rule, most engines will have the ignition advanced, but as I am told it is almost impossible to make engines pink on this new premium petrol, all should be on their guard not to advance too much. That will reduce the benefit and may also cause other troubles, such as damage to starter motors and bearings. So there is a word of warning to see that the various settings are checked and adjusted by genuine expert hands as opposed to the hit-and-miss variety that is all too common. I honestly recommend seeking information from the car's makers.

ANOTHER new factor is the likelihood of a real buyer's market returning, when motor traders are keen to sell. That is the only healthy way for business to be transacted. Yet, for too long, the reverse has existed and all manner of evils have dwelt with it. I see that the trade association are trying to keep some check on prices allowed for cars taken in part exchange. That is a pity, and they would do well to let things find their own level. In pre-war days, you may remember, almost every trader would quote you exactly the same figure for your old car in part exchange for the new one you selected, seemingly regardless of its condition. The man who had cherished his car and taken great care of it was no better off than the owner who had thrashed his car and lavished no care on it whatsoever. That is bad, and should not be so.

Now the re-sale embargo has been cut down to twelve months for cars in the covenant scheme, there may be some more movement in recent models. All this will help to get more post-war cars into ordinary motorists' hands. The purchase-tax problem remains with us and the trade complain bitterly that the possibility of its being reduced before long has held up sales. And no wonder. But to me, it is only a rumour which started at the Motor Show in October out of wishful thinking, and I can see no foundation for it. Let no one, please, now buy a new car and then blame me if the tax is cut down within months. . . . I know no more than anyone else. But to expect it to be reduced, or cut out, is not logical, in my view.

WHAT terrific interest the Rootes Group are taking in the sports side of motoring! They are building up a great team for the Monte Carlo Rally in a week or two, with as good a collection of drivers as could be assembled. We wish them luck—and it does enter into Rally driving—and we know that on the Continent success in these major events is taken very seriously and does a wealth of good for the sales of the cars concerned. The Sunbeam Talbot is putting up a great show, and with the experienced Norman Garrard as team captain, seems set to gain some laurels.

If you move about the country as I do, there is a minor annoying and petty variation in the price of petrol. Why on earth we have farthings differences from area to area I don't know. The companies allege it is in connection with distribution costs. But should it be as much as a farthing per gallon? Perhaps the battle for our custom, which opens on February 1, will produce some answer.

Readers may be interested to know that Mr. Hartley is due to commence a "Motoring and the Motorist" programme on the B.B.C. Midland Home Service on January 6.

"I wonder! Could you contrive to look a little picturesque for a minute?"

FIRST-CLASS FOOD AND WINE
by Lucullus

VI. MAISON PRUNIER

TAKE a walk down St. James's Street, London, S.W.1, and almost in the shadow of the ancient Palace of St. James you will find, at No. 72, the *Maison Prunier*, renowned for the excellence and variety of its sea-foods, no less than for its exquisite wines. This house is under the personal direction of Madame S. P. Prunier, a great-granddaughter of the founder of the famous Paris establishment which still bears his name.

Now I have always had a sneaking sympathy for the small boy who, let loose among the *hors d'œuvres*, enjoyed them so much and ate so many that, with the most determined will in the world he found himself totally unable to cope with the rest of the meal. And I was reminded of this juvenile *bon viveur* as I sat and contemplated the long and intriguing menu during a recent visit to this famous house.

But I avoided the temptation which had beset the small boy since I had been invited by Madame Prunier to sample a luncheon which should include a dish from Normandy, recently introduced by her *chef des cuisines*, the talented M. Cochois, who knows the secrets of a thousand sauces.

Our meal opened with *Œufs Lucullus*, that classic offering which consists of hard-boiled eggs sliced in half. These are crowned with a *mousse de foie gras*, with cream and truffles, a touch of port, and finished with a blanket of jelly.

But when, to drink with them, I was served with a glass of port, I must confess to having been momentarily disconcerted. My own idea—if I took anything at all at this stage—was a glass of a not too dry white wine, say, a *Côteaux du Layon* '45, one of those excellent wines of the Anjou which I do not feel are sufficiently well appreciated in this country, and some examples of which I had spotted on the wine list.

I remembered, however, that in France port is often drunk as an *apéritif*; not a vintage or tawny port such as we take here at the end of a meal, but of a dry white type. It was with this, of course, that I was served, after which it seemed to me nothing else could have been more appropriate.

M. Cochois, *chef des cuisines* at Prunier's, examines a magnificent crab, which seems to have extremely savage-looking claws, before including it in the day's menu.

The new *plat* proved to be *Terrine Dieppoise*, an altogether delicious concoction prepared with turbot, sole, red mullet and a few mussels, plus the addition, among other things, of leeks, shredded onions and celery. This is finished with dry white wine, butter and a fair measure of cream; and by the time it is set before one, artistically arranged in its earthenware dish, it is indeed a gourmet's delight.

You might, of course, call it a fish stew, though it is much more elegant than that, and differs from the famous *bouillabaisse* not only by virtue of being composed of different fish, but also because it lacks saffron, garlic, tomato and oil. Altogether a far more delicate affair than its cousin from Marseilles, and one which I can recommend to the most discriminating. What to drink with it certainly presented no problem, except that of making up one's mind what to choose from such a long and exceptionally interesting list.

However, under the expert guidance of M. Guyot, the genial and most knowledgeable restaurant manager, and his assistant Pierre, I was steered away from the more obvious hocks, moselles and white burgundies and introduced to that which I have not encountered in this country before, a *vin du Centre* called *Sancerre Rose*, dry and pink, which came in a hock-shaped bottle from the ice-bucket, and gave me fascinated pleasure. It seemed to me, moreover, to lend itself particularly well to the red mullet contained in the dish before me.

I wound up with Angels-on-Horseback accompanied by a glass of *Mesnil Nature*, a still champagne. But it was the coffee which particularly earned my admiration, made at table in an individual earthenware filter; in my view this is the only way coffee should be served in a place rating itself a really first-class restaurant, but so seldom is.

Many of the dishes here are prepared from special recipes garnered from all corners of France, tested and improved upon by several generations of the Prunier family. There is, for example, the delicate and delightful *Croustade de Fruits de Mer* with a *Sauce Américaine*, or the *Pâté de Gibier*, which, when served with a *salade* such as Prunier's can mix, is something to be remembered.

Many people are hesitant to try a dish which they do not know, and so miss a great deal that would give them pleasure. At the *Maison Prunier* they need not hesitate. Here it is M. Guyot's especial delight to tempt his guests to gastronomical adventure by suggesting dishes which may be new to them—and changing them absolutely without question if they are not to their taste or expectations.

And what could be fairer than that!

While enjoying plates of delicious oysters, Madame Prunier and Mr. S. Rossiter-Shepherd, the well-known gastronome and gourmet, discuss a Champagne Delamotte '47, which has a particularly fine bouquet, with the restaurant manager, M. Guyot.

★ AT THE CINEMA ★

with C. A. LEJEUNE

Volcano

(*Rialto*)

IF you can bother to recall the fuss that eventuated when Miss Ingrid Bergman decided she would like to marry the Italian film director, Signor Rosselini, you may also remember that at the time she was being directed by him in a film called *Stromboli*. Rosselini had originally planned to make the film with Italian leading dramatic actress Anna Magnani, but the rumpus that began to surround the project sent Miss Magnani off to America's William Dieterle to see if they couldn't beat the other team to it. So while Miss Bergman was busy walking bang into *Stromboli*, Miss Magnani was tearing headlong into *Volcano*. It became, in fact, a fight to a volcanic finish: but who won is anybody's guess.

It is a couple of years since we saw the Rosselini-Bergman epic. The Magnani-Dieterle piece, after being held up for some twelve months, has at last appeared and, if we are not exactly staggered, we are at least interested. Perhaps in our opinion Miss Magnani wins by a short 1500 feet, which is the amount of cutting her film had to undergo before we were allowed to see it.

If you like a meaty novelette, coupled with some first-rate acting, and dubbed into American, because this is the English version, then *Volcano* is your picture. The story is about a prostitute who has made Naples too hot to hold her, and who has been sent back by the police to her native island. Finding that a deep-sea diver has evil designs on her young sister, she saves her from a fate worse than death by first seducing the would-be seducer, and then eliminating him good and proper by cutting off his air-supply. After this, she decides she is tired of life, and walks into an erupting volcano.

Just for good measure there are some unpleasantly realistic scenes of a harpooned corpse dragged up in a net for tunny-fishing, and a little dog deliberately smothered under a load of shovelled pumice. Not exactly a story that would qualify *Volcano* to rank as one of the world's classics.

The trouble is that, while the film does present a classic actress in the person of Anna Magnani, it only presents half of her. You see her, but you don't hear her. Except when she sings, or utters ejaculations that can't be dubbed, you hear instead a synchronised voice speaking fluent American. It is certainly well done. If there is anything to be said for dubbing, it can be said of this specimen of it: but the fact remains that Miss Magnani with an American voice is not Miss Magnani, whose every inflection and twist of dialogue has a calculated characteristic style.

The whole film, in fact, is predominantly a Hollywood product: and for all the sense you get of its being made in Italy, it might just as well have been made in California, with back projection. And this impression is heightened by the charmingly fresh performance of Hollywood's own Geraldine Brooks as the younger sister. She is sweet, and acts far better than she has been encouraged to do in any of her American pictures, but never for one moment could anyone believe she was a native of the Æolian Islands, tumbled hair, bare legs and tattered dresses notwithstanding. She is simply another chip from the well-carved Hollywood block.

Forbidden City

(*Berkeley*)

FILMGOERS of discrimination should certainly see this film which, made in Hong Kong and plainly the result of an alliance between Eastern thought and Western nurture, is nevertheless Chinese and wholly fascinating.

Dealing with Court life in Peking at the end of the last century, it tells the story of a weak young Emperor who dreams of progress for his country, but is quite incapable of standing up to his foster-mother, the Dowager Empress, and her terrible authority. The inevitable result is that he loses his kingdom, his favourite wife and his liberty, and is last seen driving off to exile in a farm wagon, with nothing to sustain him but the gifts of a friendly peasantry and his own ideals.

The story is crystal clear, and the few subtitles are hardly necessary; and if at times it has a certain air of naïvete, it also has a delicacy and charm that comes all too rarely on to the screen. With exquisite decoration and lovely photography, acting and direction that are always impressive, this is a refreshing oasis in the desert of conventional film-making.

SOLVING THE CHRISTMAS GIFT PROBLEM

One gift, which many of our readers, both at home and overseas, have told us always brings letters of gratitude, is a year's subscription to The Sketch, *for regular delivery of* The Sketch *throughout the year keeps your friends in constant touch with all the interesting things that are happening in the Theatre, the Cinema and the worlds of Art, Literature and Fashion. It keeps them in touch, too, with important social functions in various parts of the country, in some of which they will, almost certainly, have a personal interest, and in others in which they will renew the acquaintance of mutual friends. And we need hardly add that every time* The Sketch *is delivered, it will be a happy reminder of your Christmas thought.*

Orders for subscriptions can be handed to any good-class newsagent or sent direct to the Subscription Department, The Sketch, *Ingram House, 195-198, Strand, London, W.C.2. The cost, which includes the Extra Christmas Number and, of course, postage, is: for friends in Canada, £2 19s.; for friends elsewhere abroad, or at home, £3.*

The Narrow Margin

(*London Pavilion*)

THIS is a train thriller in the direct line of descent from such films as *The Lady Vanishes* and *Night Train*. Made for rather less than the average second feature budget, and completed in thirteen days, it has a tautness and a crisp businesslike air that is missing from many an expensive "epic."

The story is quite simple—merely a couple of detectives, one old and one young, who are charged with the job of bringing a gangster's widow from Chicago to Los Angeles to testify before a Grand Jury investigation. Quite a number of people involved in the case make it their business to see that she doesn't arrive. The elder detective is shot before they can even get the lady on the train; but the younger one, after all sorts of violent encounters, manages to deliver her in good order and in one piece.

There is one word of warning that must be uttered. If you are going to see this film, make sure that you see it from the start. There is a twist at the end that will take you by surprise if you haven't watched and listened to it very carefully. It's quite fair. All the groundwork has been laid. And even after an hour of plot and counterplot, sinister meetings and slamming action, its logic is inescapable—if you have been paying attention.

The Narrow Margin is the sort of film that the Trade calls a "sleeper"—a picture that is lightly tossed off, that no one thinks much of, that has no big star names in its cast, and that suddenly surprises its owners by becoming "box-office" in a big way. That's what happened in the case of *The Thin Man*. And it just proves all over again that brains and technical competence can often bring off what sheer weight of money so often lamentably fails to accomplish.

The Steel Trap

(*Gaumont, Haymarket*)

THIS *very* satisfying picture, with Joseph Cotten and Teresa Wright, is a real object lesson in the way the best-laid plans may fail to work out, not because of any weakness in the planning, but by the perversity with which little details suddenly seem to gang up out of sheer devilry against the planner.

Jim Osborne, assistant manager of a big bank in Los Angeles, has a whale of a good idea. Every Friday for ten years he has locked up the bank's safe for the week-end. How easy it would be, he thinks, to stuff all the money into a suitcase one Friday, pick up his wife, get on the first available plane and be in Brazil (where there is no extradition treaty) before the bank opens on the Monday morning!

Of course it was easy. There was nothing in the world to stop him except the fact that every detail had to work to a strict time-table. When the tickets had been carefully bought and the passports were in order, then the bank had to close its doors exactly to time, there must be no trouble with the Customs, there must be no slowing down of time in any way.

And of course, Fate takes a hand. The tellers linger over their books. The cashier checks his balance again and again. The manager stops in his office discussing a friend's golf handicap. There is a traffic jam. A storm delays the flight. Officials all along the route refuse to be bullied, cajoled or hurried. It is, in fact, a sermon on the contrariness of things in general—and I have no intention of telling you just how it works out. But you can take it from me that, despite a somewhat dubious happy ending, it is all jolly good fun and suspense and excitement. And, as they say, it makes you think. Any one of us might at any moment be rubbing shoulders with adventure.

Folly to be Wise

(*Odeon, Marble Arch*)

ALASTAIR SIM and James Bridie! The old, irresistible partnership! Here it is again in a film version of Bridie's wartime play, *It Depends What You Mean*.

It's all very simple. Just the story of the disruption of a Garrison Theatre Brains Trust by a pertinacious A.T.S. private who insists on having a proper answer to her question: "Is Marriage a Good Idea?" The Trust, composed of local celebrities, finds some difficulty in giving her a straight and satisfactory reply, and before it is over it becomes clear that all is not well with the marriage of two of the "Brains," while a third "Brain" is obviously far from innocent of complicity in the domestic discord.

With good lines, Alastair Sim as the Chaplain question-master, Janet Brown as the persistent questioner, and George Cole to express the gratitude of the camp for a stimulating and unusual evening, there is no lack of fun and laughter. It is only when the film tries to break away from the ideas of the theatre that a superbly funny entertainment tends to sag into screen conventionality. If it could, towards the end, have been better, by golly it could have been a darned sight worse.

OUR FASHION PORTFOLIO

by Norah Owen

"ELEGANT ECONOMY" BRINGS YOU GOLD AND GLITTER FOR THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Golden satin, rich and gleaming, is an evening favourite for young and old. For the young it has a shining simplicity, for the older woman, a smooth dignity. This dress, with its flowing lines, has a strapless top, tightly fitting and heavily jewel-encrusted. The skirt moves freely from a pointed waistline. Also in pale grey, black and a beautiful blue, it is to be found at Marshall and Snelgrove's, London, Leeds, Harrogate, Sheffield and Scarborough, price 15 gns.

OUR FASHION PORTFOLIO (*continued*)

Headlines for

WITH every New Year there is news in hair styles. In 1953, the Coronation year, there seems to be even more concentration on new lines for our hair, and there is a variety to choose from, depending, of course, on one's own personality and features.

An Elizabethan influence is shown in many styles, with their centre-partings, feathery curls and page-boy lines. The short, cropped heads of the last few years have now become definitely feminine, although it does seem that hair is not going to be worn longer for quite a while.

Change is good for everyone, and after the gloom of winter, nothing is more refreshing for a woman than to greet the spring with a reburnished head.

This crisp, young style has a swept-up, lively look, with a cluster of soft curls rising in the centre. It has width above the eyes, emphasising the neck and chin lines. The back of the hair is short and well-shaped, and the whole is elegant, but casual enough for the countryside.
By Vasco, Dover Street.

r the New Year

This style has a longer hair-line, smooth at the back, contrasting with the cluster of curls on the brow. *By Steiner, Grosvenor Street*, it is sprayed with his "Copper Leaf" Starmist.

Boyish in its inspiration, the clever cutting of this simple style makes it delightfully feminine. The back is shaped to the nape of the neck, the front brushed forward, in feathery curls. *By Rene of Grosvenor Street.*

Here the hair is parted in the centre, and in front is brushed into "écaillettes," which fall gently away to each side of the forehead. The back hair is swept back into two pirouettes. *By Antoine (de Paris), Dover Street.*

In a simple style for the young or the country woman, the hair is swept softly back from the brow without a parting, falling into loose natural curls at the back. *By Truefitt and Hill, Bond Street.*

OUR FASHION PORTFOLIO (*continued*)

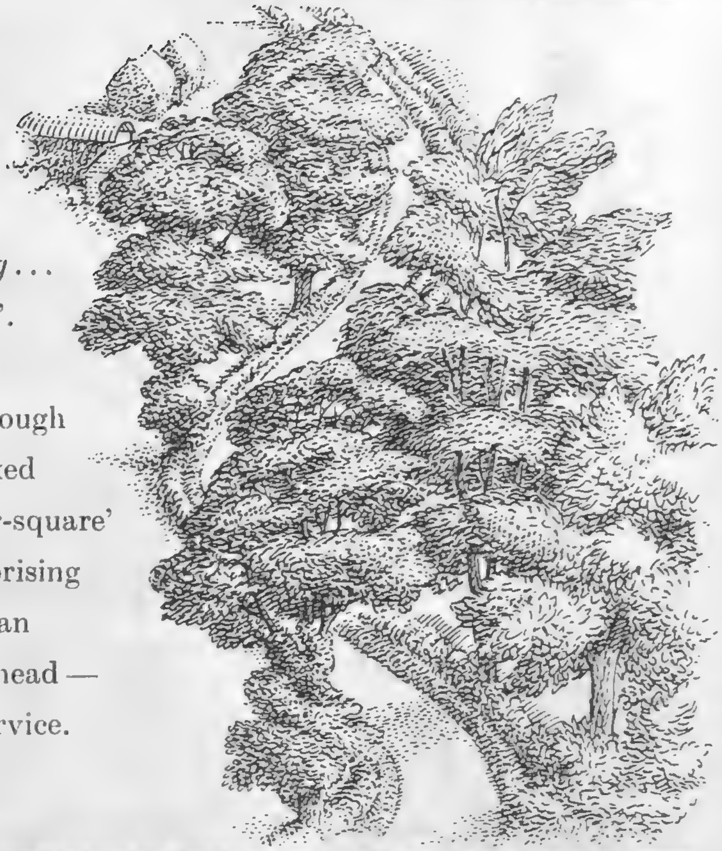
DREAM GIFTS FOR BEAUTIFUL WOMEN

Above : Furs that every woman dreams of for a personal gift for Christmas are typified by this little black seal-musquash jacket, which is ideal for cocktail and evening wear. It has the long-waisted line, without front fastenings, and has short bell-shaped sleeves. *From Bradleys.*

Right : Most sumptuous is this little bolero in snow-white mink, with a small collar, continuing into a single band of fur. The skins are gracefully worked in tiers mounted on silk. *From the National Fur Company.*

Specially photographed for "THE SKETCH" by Keith Ewart.

The way ahead



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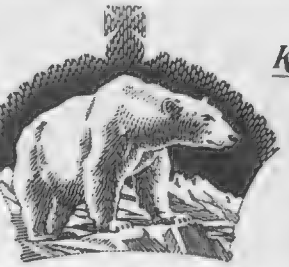

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A SHOPPING TREASURE HUNT

By Susan Carr

WHEN looking with dismay at the loose covers in my drawing-room, which were bought at a time when material was scarce and have proved very unsatisfactory, I have often dreamed of a material that would not wear out, could be sponged clean, and, in addition, would be moth- and fire-proof, child- and dog-proof. Now, to my great amazement I have found just this and more in a new upholstery fabric which is "washable, scratch-resistant, dirt-repelling, flame-resistant and water-proof." Yet, although it is a synthetic coated fabric, it has the appearance of brocade. In addition to all this, the makers claim that drink, ink or oil splashes can be removed from this material, which is called "Florestin." I have just had some chairs covered in it—I chose saxe-blue—and I can assure you that they really look very nice. Although you can get free patterns of this material on request, I think that it *must* be seen in the piece or on furniture to be fully appreciated.

• • •

A French novelty which is both ingenious and attractive can now be bought in London. This is a large piece of material (72 ins. square) printed ready to be cut out and sewn into a circular skirt. The material is a silky dupion, the printed stripes being very narrow at the waist and broadening towards the hem to give the effect of shadow-pleating when made up. The square of fabric has the outlines of the skirt printed in with the pattern, so that even the most inexperienced dress-maker can tackle it with confidence. The "skirt," which is called "Jupeclair," has black stripes printed on backgrounds of white, emerald, grey, beige, primrose, royal blue or sherry.

• • •

Parents of small children will welcome the news that Dean's famous Rag Books have returned to the home market for the first time since 1939. It is fifty years since these rag books, with their amusing trade mark of a bulldog and a terrier trying in vain to pull one of these practically indestructible books to bits, were invented for young children by Henry Samuel Dean. Well, here they are back again as strong and colourful as ever and with a number of new titles added to the old favourites.

• • •

Feeling, I must admit, rather like a parcel on a Christmas-tree, I have been trying out some Cover-Shoes, which, I am assured, some 18,000,000 women in the United States carry in their handbags in case of showers! Once I had got used to seeing my feet encased in transparent plastic, I realised how exceedingly useful these Cover-Shoes could be. They can be worn over high heels, low heels or wedges, and consist of little bags of very strong plastic, called polythene, which are tear-proof, water-proof and dust-proof, and help to keep the feet warm.

• • •

Let me confess it—my handbag is usually untidy and I am always wasting time fumbling for my lipstick or cigarette-lighter which get lost with monotonous regularity among a miscellany of keys, pens, letters and shopping lists. So I welcomed my next find with particular joy. It is a neat open-topped container—called a "Bag Tidy"—which is cleverly divided into pockets of varying sizes. I wondered at first whether this added "purse" might not make confusion worse confounded, but I am happy to report that it neatly files my purse, wallet, comb, pen, compact and cigarette-lighter, which I can now find instantly.

• • •

There are several good fruit-juice extractors in the shops, but one I particularly like is silver-plated and very handsome-looking. It is inserted through the orange or lemon at an angle, the plunger in the top being then used to remove any pith from the tube. A quick twist of the extractor cuts the inside fibre of the fruit. When the fruit is gently squeezed there is a ready flow of fresh juice for flavouring fish, oysters, cocktails or what-you-will.

• • •

My tailpiece strikes a suitably festive note this month for it is a glass of champagne! Yes, a very good champagne shipped by Lubin et Cie is now available for the first time in a baby bottle, which contains an eighth of a bottle or just one full champagne-glassful. I can't think of many people who wouldn't be pleased to find one of these baby champagne bottles in the foot of their Christmas stocking!

How Much It Costs And Where To Find It

"Florestin" upholstery fabric : about £1 a yard (50 ins. wide) ; Armoride (Sales), Ltd., Armoride House, Orchard Street, London, W.1. "Jupeclair" skirt : £5 19s. 6d. ; Dickins and Jones. Dean's Rag Books : 2s. and 3s. each ; large stores and booksellers. "Cover-Shoes" : 4s. 11d. ; in three sizes, small (sizes 2½ to 3½) ; medium (sizes 4 to 5½) and large (sizes 6 to 7½), from large stores. Essell "Bag Tidy" : 7s. 6d. ; Barkers. "Lemjuce" fruit-juice extractor : 10s. ; Simpson (Piccadilly). Champagne—Baby Lubin : 4s. 6d. a bottle (in cartons of four bottles) from wine merchants, etc.

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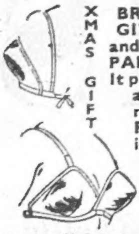

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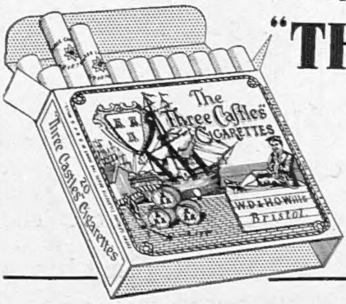

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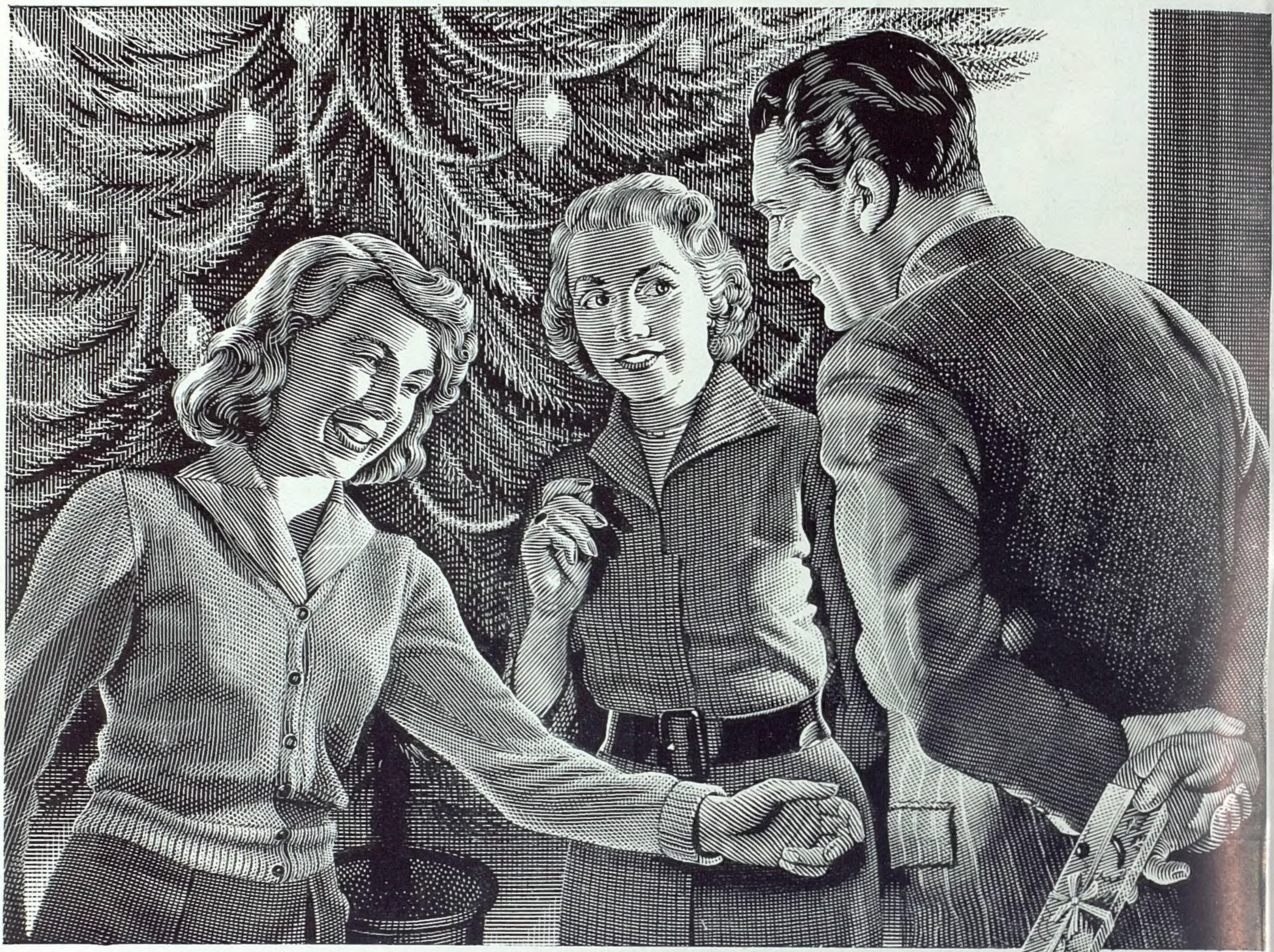

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But it's true of a fine Swiss jewelled-lever watch. The finest, most famous product of the country most famous for watchmaking. The country that has bred ten generations of watchmakers. The country that's ahead of all others in watchmaking precision, invention, equipment.

Take no chances, though! Choose with the help of an expert.

The qualified jeweller is there to help you. He alone can tell you how to know the good and lasting watch. Only through him can you be sure that a new watch is in perfect condition; that you're getting full, fair choice from the latest models; that you'll be giving not only a reliable watch but the certainty of reliable after-care.

Give a fine Swiss jewelled-lever watch—with the help of a jeweller.

Your jeweller's knowledge is your safeguard

The WATCHMAKERS OF SWITZERLAND

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